

Student Behavioral Conflict Standard Operating Procedures

Purpose

Teacher/counselor vision: Procedure equips teachers so when handling student behavior conflicts they can fill the role of both teacher and counselor.

To provide standard operating procedures and approaches targeted at grades 5-10 for addressing behavioral issues in the classroom.

To aid in mitigating conflict from the beginning and changing teacher-student dynamics from addressing conflict via condemnation or the problem persisting, to a counselor-student dynamic wherein understanding is found and conflicts are reduced.

Issues Addressed:

1. Lack of attention span
 - a. Showing little interest in even hands-on sessions
 - b. Questions that deviate from subject
2. Not listening to elders/teachers
3. Mischievous behavior especially to other gender
 - a. Teasing
 - i. If it is happening between two others are associated with these students and the class gets diverted
4. Heightened exposure to digital screens

Importance of Student Behavioral Conflict SOPs:

- Teachers recognize these issues but need basic counseling on the first level to intervene and effectively reduce or mitigate them.
- Parents have the notion and expectation that teachers are competent to handle these types of issues.
- Parents can have difficulty addressing these problems of students at home.
- Building conflict resolution skills is essential for students and begins with teachers.

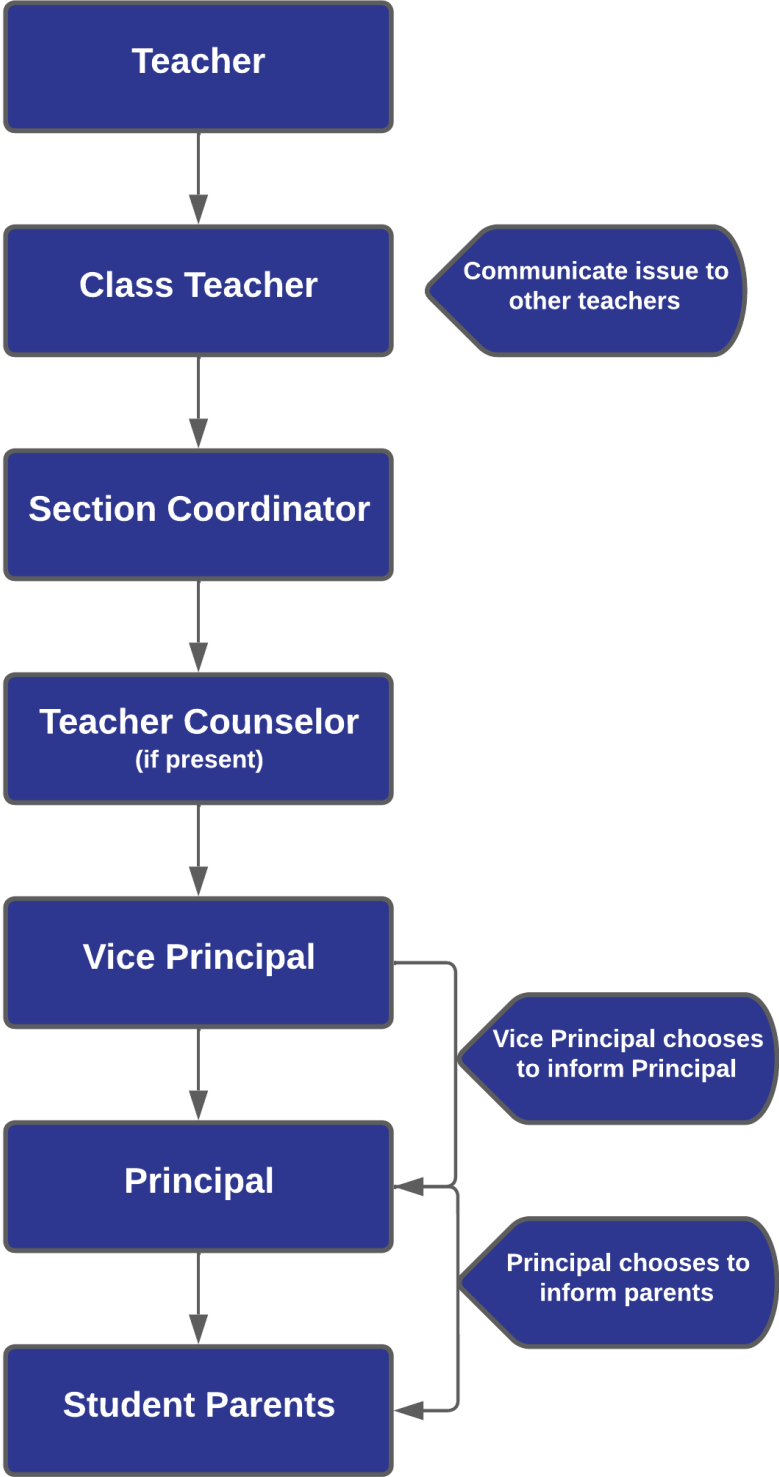


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Communication Procedure



Overview of Procedure Usage

This protocol categorizes classroom behavioral conflicts into ***four differing levels of severity***:

1. **Mild**
2. **Minor**
3. **Moderate**
4. **Severe**

Depending on the circumstances, any behavioral conflict can start at any one of these levels and potentially progress or persist. Therefore, the specific teacher approaches to conflict mitigation for each level of severity may be used in a progressive manner if necessary. Each level of conflict severity, however, includes the Communication Procedure indicating who is required to be notified given the level of severity and/or potential progression of the conflict.

For each level of severity, the initial teacher level approach to be taken is provided along with instructions for the appropriate circumstances present that warrant movement through the Communication Procedure for each level of behavioral conflict severity.

Teacher Initial Approach to Mitigating and Addressing Classroom Conflict

It is important to remember that the goal of student conflict resolution is not only to mitigate and resolve the conflict. As not only a teacher, but a counselor, mentor, and example to students, your role is to facilitate students' growth in their learning how to handle conflicts when they arise. Children's development of conflict resolution skills, just as academics, is an integral part of their school education. Learning how to handle conflict, disagreements, and emotions that can lead to behavioral challenges is a principal part of social emotional learning.



Mitigating Conflict: Setting Up for Success

- Discipline Philosophy and Practices
 - Having a discipline philosophy that is closely aligned with what is sometimes called “positive parenting,” “positive discipline,” or “creative constructive discipline” is central to a healthy classroom culture and the mitigation of student behavioral conflict (Source? Or just mention who calls it these things). This philosophy of discipline is based on respect for children and a belief in the importance of our relationships with them as individuals. The basic expectations are that children stay with the class, follow directions, and treat everyone with kindness and respect. It is recognized that these are skills children are gradually developing, and teachers hold an integral role to model, coach, and facilitate them. **This is achieved by using reminders and logical consequences and teaching “peacemaking”: managing conflict through empathy, inner peace, talking and listening, and seeking agreement.** An example of a logical consequence is to remove a child from a specific activity if he or she is having trouble participating appropriately. In this case, we suggest something else for the child to participate in and, depending on the situation, might also suggest some quiet time in study hall or Yoga as an invitation to the student to take a breath and try to find his or her own inner peace. This protocol aids in determination of when consequences are appropriate, what type of consequence is appropriate, and in general the protocol to follow when behavioral conflicts arise immediately and either dissipate or persist.
- Institute a culture of respect by introducing the **“PEARL” Class Agreements**: **Participate, Enthuse, Appreciate, Respect & Listen.** The PEARL Classroom Agreements are VSOE’s basic behavior expectations. Present this set of agreements to students as essentially a “contract” that they are agreeing to by being a part of the classroom community.
 - **This sets a benchmark of expected behavior instead of assuming students know what behavior is tolerated and what behavior is not tolerated in the classroom.** Ambiguity of expected classroom behavior can lead to children being made to feel wrong, while not fully understanding what they did wrong or how they should behave in the classroom. Clearly stated Classroom Agreements and the consequences of breaking them increase student awareness and responsibility for their own behavior. Further, blame on the teacher for calling



them out on unacceptable behavior is mitigated and trusting student-teacher relationships are strengthened rather than harmed—as it is clear to students that the teacher is not personally calling them out for their behavior, it is rather because classroom agreements were broken.

➤ **PEARL Classroom Agreements:**

- **Participate**
 - Actively engage in the material being taught and contribute to everyone's learning.
- **Enthuse**
 - Have a positive and enthusiastic attitude when participating in class, especially when you are challenged.
- **Appreciate**
 - Show your appreciation to teachers, fellow students and all VSOE faculty both in word and action.
- **Respect**
 - Respect each other and each other's property.
 - Be kind in word and action.
 - Keep your hands to yourself.
 - Do not engage in any name calling or swearing (it is firmly unacceptable at VSOE).
 - Respect yourself.
 - Do not engage in activities that could potentially injure yourself or others.
 - Ask for what you need.
 - Communicate to teachers and faculty if you are feeling unwell or struggling with something.
 - Respect the classroom and any space being used.
 - Take care of the classroom, school, and resources provided at all VSOE locations.
- **Listen**
 - Give your full attention to teachers, fellow students, and all VSOE staff while they are speaking.
 - Do not interrupt others.



- Show respect to teachers and yourself by listening carefully so as to properly complete activities and get the most value out of your education at VSOE.

Addressing Classroom Conflict

- Consequences of Breaking Classroom Agreements
 - It is important from the beginning that students are aware that there are consequences of breaking these agreements.
 - Consequences:
 - Receiving a reminder that the Classroom Agreements have been broken.
 - Not participating in the next class activity if the student is not able to stop disruptive behavior after reminder.
 - Mild: Taking time away in the Library, doing Yoga, or another separate activity.
 - More Severe: Taking a timeout (with no alternative activity offered) or going to the Vice Principal's office.

Foundations of Student Behavioral Conflict Resolution

Creating a Choice

- The most effective general rule when addressing youth behavioral conflict is to create the conditions in which the student is faced with making their own choice regarding their behavior in the classroom environment.
 - Example: “If you continue to not respect your other classmates, you are not going to be able to participate in the next activity. If you listen to and respect your classmates, you will be able to join everyone for the next activity.”
- By explaining ground rules in this fashion, the student gets to make a choice. Without this opportunity they have little reason to stop what they are doing because it hasn't really impacted them. In this way, however, the child gets to decide if it's worth it to, for example, call names, and miss the next class activity. Being given such self-responsibility, children will soon learn that when they are not doing antagonizing things,



they will both get to participate in activities and discover that they are better liked and accepted by fellow classmates.

- By making the child have to think about and have a reckoning with their own values, the foundational psychology of effectively participating in society is mimicked. The child is forced to ask themselves the question, “Do I want to sit over here and be left out of the class activity, or do I want to be included and have friends?” These are important lessons that children will use throughout their lives and are instrumental to their functioning effectively and successfully in society later in life.

Knowing Your Students

- Teachers should be familiar with students' general demeanor. If a behavior is very out of character for a student, the first thing that should be addressed –privately with the student– is if anything is different today.
- **There is a difference between a child having a bad day and having a general disposition of misbehavior.** This difference is important as it **largely determines the appropriate course of action to take on the teacher level** in addressing behavioral conflict.
- **Example:**
 - **Situation:** A student who is usually studious and excited to participate in all activities appears to have no interest in joining in the class session.
 - **Approach:**
 - Privately ask the student questions that can lead you to an appropriate course of action:
 - “How are you doing today?”
 - “Is there anything different today?” or “Is there anything you would like me to know about?”
 - These introductory questions lead the way to the important question of, “Do you think you are going to be able to finish the class today?”
 - If the student answers that they think they will be able to, remind them of the PEARL Classroom Agreements, and that listening to instruction and participating are part of the agreements because they are what make the classroom community environment work for everyone.



- If the student answers that they do not think they will be able to finish the class today or at least the current activity, given your knowledge of this being unusual behavior for the student, offer the option for them to take time to themselves by going to the library or to do Yoga.
 - If the student shares that they have had a bad day at home or something currently going on in their personal home life is impacting their day at school, offering an option to take time for themselves or complete an alternative activity is an appropriate and effective approach to take. If the student wishes to remain in the class, however, and their behavior is not directly impacting other students or the class activity, you may proceed with the class session with sensitivity to the student's condition.
- **Analysis:** While offering an alternate activity or time away from the class is an appropriate course of action to take when a student's behavior is highly unusual, this does not provide conditions for a clear and effective choice for students with a history of misbehavior. It could be construed from the continuation of these behaviors in students with a history of misbehavior that allowing them to do alternative activities is not effective. Children will often figure out how to get away with whatever they want (which in this case could be misbehaving in order to get to leave class and go do something else) and often do not understand that this is not in their best interest socially, academically or emotionally. If this appears to be the case, letting the student know that if they do not think they are going to be able to participate today they will have to go to the Vice Principal's office is the appropriate course of action.
- This importance of knowing students highlights the necessity to follow the Communication Protocol and contact the student's Class Teacher (if you are not the Class Teacher) in the face of conflict in order to determine the appropriate course of action.

Anecdotal Record Policy

- Each time a conflict is addressed, **teachers are required to document the conflict in the Anecdotal Records.**
 - This allows other teachers to reference the Anecdotal Records and better understand students' behavior.



- This further provides reference for the actions taken to address conflicts for better understanding what worked or might not have worked in the past to mitigate conflict for students on an individual level.

Teacher Approach and Communication Protocol Based on Severity of Behavioral Conflict

❖ Severity: Mild

Description: Student(s) behavior is not blatantly disruptive of the classroom and others, however, it is impacting the child's focus/participation or is causing minor disturbance to the classroom and has the potential to become more severe.

- **Example 1 (Disruptive Behavior):** A classroom activity is going very well, however a small group of students working together are growing loud in their enthusiasm to work together and complete the project and it is beginning to cause minor disruption of the class.
- **Example 2 (Individual Non-participation):** An individual student is sitting off to the side at gym and showing little to no interest in participating in the activity/game.
- **Example 3 (Individual Frustration):** An individual student becomes frustrated that they cannot solve a math problem and appears to give up on solving the rest of the problems in the activity.

**See "Feedback Sandwich" approach solutions for each corresponding example below.*

Teacher Level Approach

- Giving Feedback



- Each time we receive feedback or offer it to another, it's an opportunity and gift. What a rare thing to share our insights and be of service to another, and to learn from what they do and their process, too. It's also our job, for our students and fellow faculty.
- Finding the appropriate time to give feedback requires judgment of whether the situation allows for private discussion with the student. If the class has been given instruction and is engaged in an activity, privacy is adequate to give feedback to student(s) in the classroom mid-activity. If the student(s) behavior was noticed throughout the day and there was not an opportunity for a brief private conversation during a class activity, you may choose to check in with the student at the end of the day and give feedback.
- Some ways to give feedback:
 - ◆ I noticed you did this...can you say what your thought process was?
 - ◆ I'm curious about the process you used to get to this point - could you bring me through your steps?
 - ◆ Ask: What were some things you thought went well today/this week? What was challenging?
 - ◆ When you _____ I noticed _____.
 - ◆ Consider a **“Feedback Sandwich”** - this is one area for improvement sandwiched between two positive observations. Most people hear the negative comments much louder than the positive which is why “sandwiching” the criticism/area for improvement between two positive affirmations can be very effective.
 - **Example 1 (Disruptive Behavior):**
 - *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “Boys, I love that you are so happy and enjoying this activity, as well as getting along with each other.”
 - *Criticism/Area for improvement:* “However, it feels that you are being too loud for the space which is causing distractions. Can



you please lower your volume to better respect the space and others?”

- *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “I am sure it is fun to be together completing this activity. You are both/all working well together and appreciating each other.”

➤ **Example 2 (Individual Non-participation):**

- *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “Annika, I love how enthusiastic you are about reading the book we have been reading as a class.”
- *Criticism/Area for improvement:* “However, I noticed you are not fully participating in this activity today. What is stopping you from doing this activity? Is there something challenging you about this specific activity?”
- *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “Your interest in learning and reading is inspiring!”

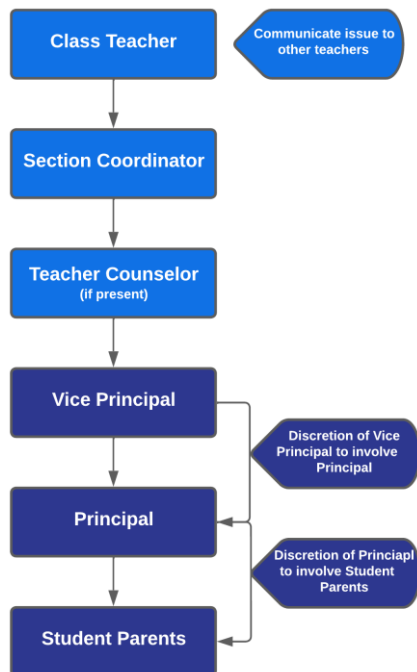
➤ **Example 3 (Individual Frustration):**

- *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “Aman, I love that you are so determined to learn math. I can see that you have high expectations for yourself to be able to solve these problems.”
- *Criticism/Area for improvement:* “But I feel that you are being very hard on yourself for taking time to learn these difficult problems. If you are having difficulty with a problem please ask questions so that we can work on things together. Oftentimes, other students have the same questions but don’t ask. This way the problems can become easier for you as well as everyone.”
- *Praise/Positive Affirmation:* “These are challenging problems, and it's great to see how passionate you are.”



- *If behavior persists after this teacher approach is taken, move to the next level in the Communication Procedure and notify the Class Teacher or Section Coordinator if you are the Class Teacher and communicate the issue to other teachers. Follow the Communication Procedure accordingly if behavior persists.*

**Record issue addressed in Anecdotal Record*



❖ Severity: Minor

Description: The PEARL Classroom Agreements of respect have been clearly crossed.

- Example: You notice that a student is intermittently kicking the back of the chair of the student in front of them in a manner that appears to be teasing and/or for want of attention.



Teacher Level Approach

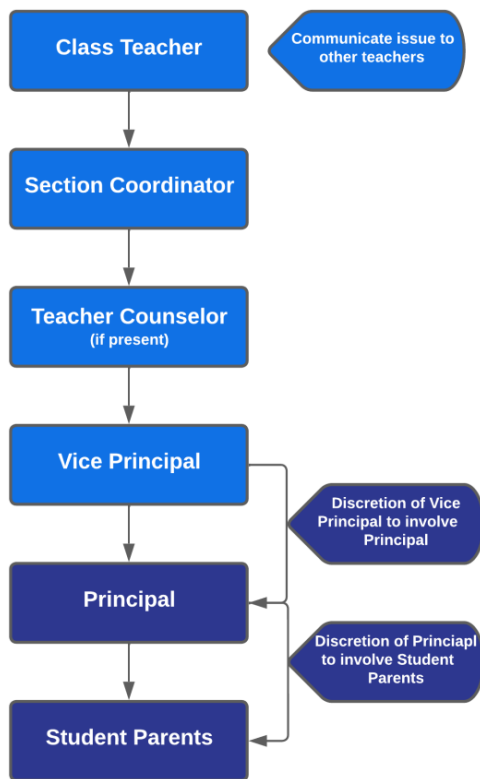
- When the opportunity arises to privately communicate with the student(s) in or outside of the classroom, remind the student(s) of the PEARL Classroom Agreements.
- If the student(s) behavior requires immediate attention due to impact on another student (as the above example describes) or the classroom environment, create an opportunity to address the disruptive behavior without openly calling out the student in front of the entire class:
 - Instruct the class to complete a brief task that will allow for their occupation while you address the situation.
 - For example, if in the middle of a lesson, instruct students to take a moment to review their notes from the last class and find and write down two questions they have about the topic from doing this.
 - Approach the student and ask if they can tell you the five PEARL Classroom Agreements. Continue and ask the student if they think they are abiding by these classroom agreements that *they agreed to* in order to allow them to participate in the class. Regardless of the student's answer, explain to the student that it does not appear that they are following these required Classroom Agreements by _____. (Behavior example: kicking the student's desk chair in front of them). Explain that if the behavior continues, you will have to send them to the Vice Principal's office. ***If you are not the class teacher:** Inform the student that you will have to tell their class teacher about their behavior.
 - If behavior persists after this conversation:
 - As the Class Teacher, send the student to the Vice Principal's office.



- If not the class teacher, contact the class teacher and confirm sending the student to the Vice. Principal's office or the appropriate course of action given their better knowledge of the student.

- ***Notify the Class Teacher and Section Coordinator of the behavior and communicate the issue to other teachers.***
- ***If behavior persists after this teacher approach and notification of the Class Teacher and Section Coordinator is taken, move to the next level in the Communication Procedure and notify the Teacher Counselor. Follow the Communication Procedure accordingly if behavior persists.***

****Record issue addressed in Anecdotal Record***



❖ Severity: Moderate

- **Definition:** Agreements of respect have been crossed a second time or behavior is clearly very disrespectful and/or disruptive to the class at onset.
 - **Individual Student Example:** A student is repeatedly calling another student names, and while it is a new behavior and conflict, it is clear that continuation of this behavior could escalate rapidly in forming a severe conflict between the students or others.
 - **Multi-student Example:** You notice a disturbance of raised voices during a class activity game. Two students are angrily confronting each other. When you approach one student determinedly exclaims to you that the other student is cheating. The other student, however, quickly refutes the allegation and claims it is the other student that has been cheating.

Teacher Level Approach

Individual Student Approach:

- Immediately address the student's behavior: Create an opportunity to address the disruptive behavior without openly calling out the student in front of the entire class:
 - If not already engaged in an activity, instruct the class to complete a brief task that will allow for their occupation while you address the situation.
 - For example, if in the middle of a lesson, instruct students to take a moment to review their notes from the last class and find and write down two questions they have about the topic from doing this.
 - Approach the student and ask if they can tell you the five PEARL Classroom Agreements. Continue and ask the student if they think they are abiding by these classroom agreements that *they agreed to* in order to allow them to participate in the class. Regardless of the student's answer, explain to the student that it does not appear that



they are following these required Classroom Agreements by _____(Behavior example: calling another student names repeatedly that are not their own). Explain that if the behavior continues, you will have to send them to the Vice Principal's office. ***If you are not the class teacher:** Inform the student that you will have to tell their class teacher about their behavior.

- If behavior persists after this conversation:
 - As the Class Teacher, send the student to the Vice Principal's office.
 - If not the Class Teacher, contact the class teacher and confirm sending the student to the Vice Principal's office or the appropriate course of action given their better knowledge of the student.
- After the above steps are taken for immediate mitigation of the conflict, find a time outside of class hours as soon as possible to talk with the student privately:
 - **Ask questions**
 - ◆ **Set the stage:** If you create a daily habit of checking in with students and make the PEARL Classroom Agreements clear, difficult conversations will be easier.
 - Pick times with low distractions.
 - Model the behavior you are striving to receive—communicate through word and body language your own openness to share without judgment.
 - ◆ **Ask open-ended questions** rather than asking questions that can be answered with the responses “yes” or “no.” This will encourage students to think critically about their experience rather than answer how they might think you want them to answer. Open-ended questions invoke thought and require students to reflect on their own experience and their role in the conflict. For example:
 - “What happened?”
 - “How do you feel you handled that conversation?”



- ◆ **Find the right time for difficult conversations.** Pick a time when everyone is calm. Ask permission to start the conversation and if your child is not ready, ask them when a good time would be.
- ◆ Combine the PEARL Community Agreements within questioning to remind students of their responsibility. For Example:
 - “We have a set of community agreements that need to be respected so that we can learn in the classroom together, do you feel you were respecting them?”
- Listen (do not offer opinion, agreement, or a solution).
 - ◆ Nod and hold body language that shows respect and that you are there simply to actively listen and neutrally hear their side of what happened.

Conflict Approach (multi-student conflict):

- Immediately address the students’ behavior: Create an opportunity to address the disruptive behavior without openly calling out the students in front of the entire class. Openly calling out the student’s behavior can be both traumatic for the student as well as the primary intention of the behavior thus taking power away from you as a teacher.
 - If not already engaged in an activity, instruct the class to complete a brief task that will allow for their occupation while you address the situation.
 - For example, if in the middle of a lesson, instruct students to take a moment to review their notes from the last class and find and write down two questions they have about the topic from doing this.
 - Approach the student and ask if they can tell you the five PEARL Classroom Agreements. Continue and ask the student if they think they are abiding by these classroom agreements that *they agreed to* in order to allow them to participate in the class. Regardless of the student’s



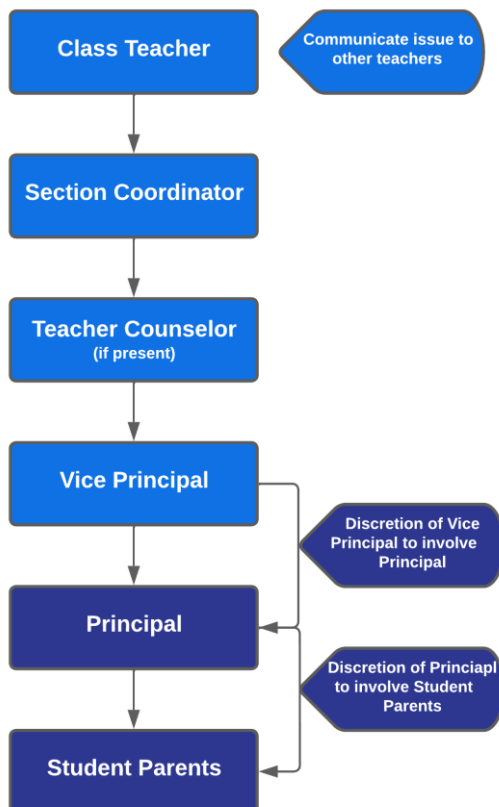
answer, explain to the student that it does not appear that they are following these required Classroom Agreements by _____. (Behavior example: by communicating with _____ (other student(s) name as they are). Explain that if the behavior continues, you will have to send them to the Vice Principal's office. ***If you are not the class teacher:** Inform the student that you will have to tell their class teacher about their behavior.

- If behavior persists after this conversation:
 - As the Class Teacher, send the student(s) to the Vice Principal's office.
 - If not the Class Teacher, contact the class teacher and confirm sending the student(s) to the Vice Principal's office or the appropriate course of action given their better knowledge of the student.
- After the above steps are taken for immediate mitigation of the conflict, find time outside of class hours as soon as possible to talk individually with each student involved in the conflict:
 - **Ask questions**
 - ◆ "What happened?"
 - ◆ "We have a set of community agreements that need to be respected so that we can learn in the classroom together, do you think you were respecting them?"
 - **Listen (do not offer opinion, agreement, or a solution)**
 - ◆ Nod and hold body language that shows respect and that you are there simply to actively listen and neutrally hear their side of what happened.
- **Following individual meetings, meet together with students involved to arrive at a mutual agreement for resolution of the conflict.**
 - Ask, "What are we going to do about this together?"
 - ◆ This approach gives students a voice which is part of the community agreements and builds trusting relationships with students as a mentor.



- ◆ Telling students “this is what we are going to do” often results in pushback that leads to more conflict. Guiding a conversation among students of how the conflict can be fixed presently and moving forward institutes more responsibility for students to abide by chosen solutions.
 - Ensure open discussion and communication of issues and conflict with other teachers.
- ***Immediately notify the Class Teacher and inform the Section Coordinator and Teacher Counselor. Notification of the Vice Principal will be deemed necessary by these parties and/or if the conflict presents conditions for immediate removal of student(s) to the Vice Principal’s office as instructed above.***

****Record issue addressed in Anecdotal Record***



❖ Severity: Severe

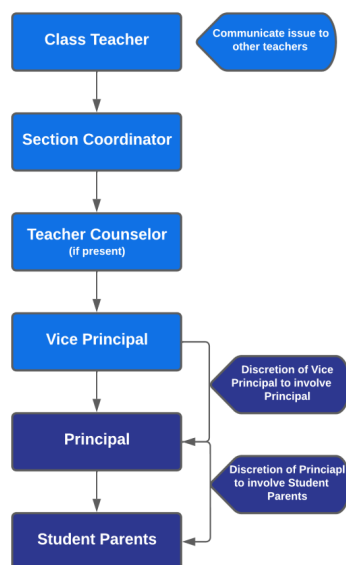
➤ Description:

- Progression from Mild, Minor and Moderate Severities: Conflict persists after the above meetings with student(s) are held—agreements of how to fix the problem are not followed.
- Behavior of student(s) disrupts the classroom environment to the degree that the session is not able to run and/or threatens the health and wellbeing of themselves and/or others.

Teacher Level

- Remove student(s) from class room—send student(s) immediately to the Vice Principal's office.
- 1. ***Inform Class Teacher, Section Coordinator, and Teacher Counselor about the behavioral conflict.***
- 2. If escalated at Vice Principal's discretion:
 - ***Contact and inform student parent(s)*** with permission of the Principal.
 - Hold a meeting with student parent(s) with the presence of the Principal.

****Record issue addressed in Anecdotal Record***



Conclusion

All classroom conflicts are highly situational and therefore so will be the immediate teacher approach that is appropriate to take. Ability to address conflict in the classroom at a certain time is highly dependent on the nature of the current activity being completed, the number of students involved in the conflict, the conditions for open and swift communication with the Class Teacher, Section Coordinator, and Teacher Counselor, knowledge of the behavioral disposition of student(s) and more. The approaches in this protocol serve as a tool kit to create a healthy classroom environment in which communication is open and behavioral conflicts are resolved in the best interest of the individual(s) involved and school as a whole. Familiarity with these general procedures, differing levels of conflict severity, and specific phrases provided create grounds for making informed decisions both in the moment that classroom behavioral conflicts arise as well as potentially progress to mitigate and resolve conflicts more effectively.



Acknowledgments

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