

Classroom management practice guide

Entrance routine

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Effective classroom management creates safe and supportive learning environments for all students. This practice guide is part of a suite of foundational resources for beginning teachers, teachers working in new environments, or experienced teachers who want to refine or refresh specific elements of their classroom management practice. They can be used to individually reflect on and refine one's own practice, or as shared resources to support mentoring and other collaborative and whole-school approaches to improving classroom management.

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)'s guidance is based on a synthesis of the most rigorous and relevant research evidence and guidance on classroom management from a wide range of research experts and expert practitioners across Australia and internationally.

An effective entrance routine promotes safety, builds positive connections with students and maximises instructional time.

This practice guide will support you to refine an effective entrance routine, which is important for maintaining a safe, supportive and orderly start to the day and classroom environment.

An effective entrance routine requires the following steps:

1. Position yourself to see all students.
2. Gain all students' attention.
3. Remind all students of the expectations for entering the classroom.
4. Monitor and reinforce behaviour expectations as students enter.
5. Gain all students' attention to be ready for the next instructions.

This routine requires several skills: acknowledgement and praise, clear communication, deliberately pausing, non-verbal corrections, scanning and voice control.

Always interact with students with a calm tone, respect and politeness – for example, greeting students on first encounter and completing instructions with 'Thank you'. Positively frame communication, stating what students need to do rather than what they don't (that is, avoid using words like 'no' and 'don't'). This models respectful and polite interactions for students and creates a positive and supportive learning environment.

An effective entrance routine

1. Position yourself to see all students

Being able to see all students allows you to ensure student safety, acknowledge students meeting behaviour expectations, and identify and promptly respond to any student behaviour that doesn't meet expectations.

Position yourself where you can see all students, and deliberately scan and monitor all students as they assemble. For example, stand in a place that allows you to monitor all students lining up, putting bags on the bag racks, or retrieving any equipment to take into class. Make blind spots out of bounds or, if this isn't possible, regularly monitor them.

2. Gain all students' attention

Efficiently gaining all students' attention maximises instructional time and reduces the likelihood of students missing critical instructional information.

Stand where all students can see you and, with an assertive voice, gain all students' attention:

1. Using a countdown, call and response or verbal prompt to indicate to students that they need to stop what they're doing, face you and listen in silence.
2. Pausing and scanning to ensure students are looking and listening.
3. Acknowledging students meeting behaviour expectations and praising students exceeding behaviour expectations specific to them.
4. Responding to behaviours not meeting expectations with a non-verbal correction such as a look and gesture, or a positively framed verbal correction such as a group reminder of expectations, and acknowledging students when they correct their behaviour.

3. Remind all students of the expectations for entering the classroom

It's important that you plan and teach the behaviour expectations for entering the classroom so students understand what's required of them. By keeping the same expectations each time, students will become familiar with your expectations for them, meaning behaviour that does not meet these expectations will be displayed less frequently.

With an assertive voice and stance, greet all students and clearly communicate the expectations for assembling, if necessary, and entering the classroom and preparing for learning.

Communicate:

- what they need
- what they should do
- where they should sit.

Check understanding of behaviour expectations by asking 2 or 3 students to repeat back the instructions with the whole class listening. Clarify and demonstrate until all students understand what is expected.

Deliberately pause and scan to allow time for students to meet expectations for assembling and preparing to enter the classroom, before instructing students to enter the classroom.

4. Monitor and reinforce behaviour expectations as students enter

It is important to monitor all students while they are entering the room. This will ensure safety, demonstrate to the students that you are aware of what is happening in the classroom and provide opportunities to assist students and reinforce behaviour expectations.

Prompt students to enter the room and continuously scan all students outside and inside the classroom as they enter and are seated. Assist students when needed.

Greet students by name as they enter the classroom to help build positive connections. This also provides an opportunity to briefly acknowledge any milestones or achievements and give reminders to individual students – for example, needing to leave the class at a certain time for an appointment or extracurricular activity, or needing to hand in something, such as a completed task or consent form.

Acknowledge students for meeting expectations – for example, ‘Thank you, outside line, for allowing the inside line to move in first’, ‘Thank you, students, for waiting quietly while...’, ‘Great to see those students who have sat down and started their [name the starter activity]’. Respond to behaviours that do not meet expectations with non-verbal or verbal correction – for example, ‘Remember [name], quietly walking straight to our desks’. Acknowledge students when they correct their behaviour.

Once all students are inside, follow them into the room and position yourself to continue to scan all students as they move to their designated areas (for example, their desks or the carpet).

5. Gain all students’ attention to be ready for the next instructions

Having a clear end to your entrance routine signals to students that they have all safely entered the classroom and are now ready for the lesson to begin.

Stand where all students can see you and, with an assertive voice, gain all students’ attention:

1. Using a countdown, call and response or verbal prompt to indicate to students that they need to stop what they’re doing, face you and listen in silence.
2. Pausing and scanning to ensure students are looking and listening.
3. Acknowledging students meeting behaviour expectations and praising students exceeding behaviour expectations specific to them.
4. Responding to behaviours not meeting expectations with a non-verbal correction such as a look and gesture, or a positively framed verbal correction such as a group reminder of expectations, and acknowledging students when they correct their behaviour.

Rehearse and practise your entrance routine

Use the checklist for each step in the following section to identify your strengths and prioritise the step you will focus on first for rehearsal and practice. Focus on one step at a time until you can confidently demonstrate each item on the checklist.

Begin by scripting and rehearsing without students present. Consider filming your rehearsal and using the relevant checklist to review the recording yourself or with a colleague.

Then practise with students present. Record and review your practice alone or with a colleague using the relevant checklist, making sure to follow school or employer policies regarding recording students.

Invite a colleague to observe your entrance routine in action. Ask them to use the checklists to provide feedback on what went well and to suggest one area for further improvement.

1. Position yourself to see all students

Rehearse then practise standing where you will be able to see all students preparing to assemble and assembling (likely just outside the entrance of your classroom). Does your position:

ensure you don't have blind spots that need to be regularly monitored?

allow you to scan and see all students preparing to enter the room?

allow all students to see you ready to gain their attention?

How might you need to adjust your position for certain classrooms or classes?

2. Gain all students' attention

Rehearse then practise:

gaining all students' attention by using your countdown, call and response, or visual cue or gesture

deliberately pausing

scanning all students

acknowledging students meeting behaviour expectations and praising students exceeding behaviour expectations specific to them

responding to disengaged or disruptive behaviours that might occur and acknowledging students when they correct their behaviour.

3. Remind all students of the expectations for entering the classroom

Identify the school's and your expectations for:

- **Students *preparing to enter the room***. For example, should students be positioned in lines, sitting or standing? What equipment do students need to have ready before entering?
- **Students *entering the room***. For example, should students quietly walk in single file? Do they unpack equipment or have it ready? Do they sit in seats or on spots on the carpet? Are they talking quietly to their neighbour? Do they complete an independent activity?

Think about the behaviours you want to see and problem behaviours you want to address.

Script, rehearse, then practise clearly communicating these expectations:

Use as few words as possible while maintaining clarity.

Break instructions down:

- into a small number of manageable steps
- in a sequential order
- so they're actionable for students.

Deliberately pause and scan to ensure students understand and are following the instructions.

Rehearsal will improve the clarity, conciseness and consistency of your language.

4. Monitor and reinforce behaviour expectations as students enter

Rehearse then practise:

prompting students to enter the classroom in the expected manner

scanning students inside and outside of the classroom

assisting students when needed

acknowledging students meeting behaviour expectations and praising students exceeding behaviour expectations specific to them

responding to disengaged or disruptive behaviours that might occur while students enter the room, and acknowledging students when they correct their behaviour.

moving to a position where you can continue to scan once all students have entered the room, ensuring your back is not facing students and blind spots are monitored.

5. Gain all students' attention to be ready for the next instructions

Rehearse then practise:

where you will position yourself so that all students can see you

gaining all students' attention by using your countdown, call and response, or visual cue or gesture.

Combine this with an instruction if required – for example, to be seated or to complete a regular learning task

deliberately pausing

scanning all students

acknowledging students meeting behaviour expectations and praising students exceeding behaviour expectations specific to them

responding to disengaged or disruptive behaviours that might occur and acknowledging students when they correct their behaviour

finishing with politeness by thanking students for meeting expectations for entering the classroom.

Questions for reflection

When you've refined each of the steps of your entrance routine, consider the following questions:

- What impact has this routine had on your students and you? What difference are you noticing to the start of your lessons?
- How consistently are you maintaining the steps of this routine? Are there any adjustments you need to make?
- Is this routine a habit for all your students? What can you do to make it a habit?
- When will you review your entrance routine and reteach it? How will you know that you need to do this?

Regularly revise your entrance routine

Schedule points in the year to revise this practice for yourself and your students.

For more practical guidance

AERO has developed a suite of resources to support teachers and school leaders to refine or refresh their foundational practices in creating safe and supportive learning environments through effective classroom management. You can read the [Classroom Management Resources: User Guide](#) for an overview of these resources and suggestions for their use.