



A Simple Way To Keep Track Of Consequences

by Michael Linsin on February 27, 2016

First off, I don't think it's terribly important how you keep track of consequences.

It's just important that you do.

You never want to be caught flatfooted if a parent asks why their child was in time-out last Tuesday.

You also want to be ready if an administrator or counselor inquires about a [student's behavior](#).

It's best to have the documentation to support your opinions.

But because it's an oft-requested topic, I thought it was high time we covered it. What follows isn't the only way to keep track of consequences.

It's just a simple one.

Go low tech.

There are many options for documenting misbehavior, but I've found that a simple class roster and a clipboard to be a good way to go.

There is something about seeing the teacher's handwritten notations from the very day misbehavior occurred that makes it seem more reliable and impressionable to parents.

A clipboard is also easily accessible and won't make you appear to be texting or checking your email during class.

Track one month at a time.

Print out a roster or spreadsheet that includes one small square per student per day and covers a period of one month.

Because the form is dedicated to behavior only, you don't need much space to record how many times and how often a student broke a rule.

Simple checks, dots, or vertical lines to represent each incident of misbehavior will do. You'll make these marks within seconds of the misbehavior occurring or as soon as you're able.

Include an explanation page.

Slip a sheet or two of notebook paper under the roster so you can include notes regarding any repeated, unusual, or [severe misbehavior](#).

Because [a warning is a courtesy](#) to students, you won't need to describe a first and only incident of misbehavior occurring within a single day – although you certainly can.

If you send a student to time-out or contact parents, however, you'll want to jot down a description of what rule or rules were broken. This can be done after the school day ends.

Example:

3/2 – Aronson, called out without raising hand, warning. Pushed while lining up for lunch, time-out.

3/5 – Sellinger, talked during lesson, warning. Talked again during lesson, time-out.

For severe misbehavior, or misbehavior that involves more than one student, you may have to write more complete descriptions.

Expose The Truth

When the month is out, clip the form and accompanying notes together and place them in a file for safe keeping. Begin a new set on the first day of each month.

When you conference with parents, you can show them your documentation as a means of expressing concern, opening dialogue, or explaining why their child earned the grade(s) they did.

Being able to reference your marks and notes regarding behavior from any day of the year engenders trust and confidence in you.

It shows that you're on the ball and that your opinions and observations are accurate and supported by eyewitness descriptions. It helps you avoid the confrontations, skepticism, and questioning of ability that plague so many teachers.

It exposes the truth in black and white and supports the SCM philosophy of [shifting responsibility](#) for listening, learning, and following rules over to students.

Where it belongs.