



How To Avoid Angry Parent Complaints

By Michael Linsin on February 6, 2016

Here at SCM, we've heard horror stories about [angry parents](#). Teachers have emailed us to share incidents of ranting and raving. They've shared how parents have interrupted their class and confronted them in front of students.

They've told of parents who've stomped into the principal's office and even shown up at board meetings to try and get them fired.

In every case, it's in response to how the teacher handled misbehavior. And in every case, it could have been avoided.

Here's how:

Get parents on record.

During [the first week of school](#), send home a copy of your classroom management plan.

Include a page with a simple declaration that the parent has read and understood your plan.

Ask for it to be signed and returned to you.

The idea is to get parents on record of knowing full well the behavior expectations of the class and how students will be held accountable.

Review your plan.

In your correspondence regarding back-to-school night, be sure and let parents know that you'll be reviewing your plan in detail.

This way, you'll be on record as having given them an opportunity to learn more, voice concerns, or ask questions.

At back-to-school night, lay out your plan from beginning to end. Walk parents through the exact steps you'll take when a student misbehaves.

Emphasize that the purpose of your classroom management plan is to protect every child's right to learn and enjoy school. Finish by promising to follow it to a tee.

Be clear, speak confidently, and you'll rarely get even a single question. You will, however, have parents thanking you afterward.

Fulfill your promise.

Now that you've publicly made a commitment to safeguard your classroom from disruption, you must follow through. You must be consistent every day of the year.

If you go back on your word, if you lecture, scold, or allow misbehavior to go without consequence, you open yourself up to complaints that are very difficult to defend against.

But here's the thing: Being consistent is made easier by [your promise](#).

You'll remember all those signatures, all those faces you met at back-to-school night, and you'll want to do right by them. You'll want to be worthy of their trust.

The Way It Is

If you follow the guidelines above, you won't get complaints. You just won't—even if not a single parent shows up at back-to-school night.

However, if the unheard of happens and a parent does voice a concern, it won't be about you.

It will be about your classroom management plan, which is non-negotiable. You'll politely explain that you'll continue to protect learning, safety, and contentment of every student in your class.

And that's just the way it is.

In 99.9 percent of cases, parents complain because their child's right to learn is being trampled on. They complain because their child has to endure an environment of chaos.

They complain because instead of having an impartial way of holding students accountable, the teacher berates and reprimands or ignores misbehavior altogether.

The secret to avoiding parent complaints is to lay bare the ins and outs of your classroom management plan from day one.

Get everyone on record—parents, students, and even yourself.

Then do what you promise.

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