

## How To Make A Warning Most Effective

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The objective of a warning is to curb misbehavior in the moment.

As well as long term.

It's to prompt understanding, reflection, and resolve not to make the same mistake again.

In this way, it works like a consequence. It looks like a consequence. It acts like a consequence. It smells like a consequence.

But in the truest sense, it isn't a consequence.

**It's a courtesy.**

You see, other than being informed that they broke a class rule, nothing else happens to a student who first transgresses your rules.

No action is forthcoming. They don't have to do or say anything. They just have to know that they've received one.

To be most effective, your students must view [your warnings](#) in this manner – as a courtesy rather than an actual consequence. It's something to be appreciated because it gives them a chance to fix their mistakes on their own before the bite of a true consequence.

A warning, though gentle, is perhaps the most important part of your classroom management plan.

It's your first line of defense and therefore must be effective in dissuading misbehavior before it grows into something more serious or disruptive.

This underscores the importance of teaching and modeling for your students this true and far more effective definition. They must understand its purpose and how a warning is given for their benefit, not yours.

Your only job is to inform, calmly and matter-of-factly – [or even kindly and apologetically](#) if the situation warrants – and then walk away without waiting for a response.

It's nothing more than a shift of information, and responsibility, from you to them. Once the shift is complete and out of your hands, you're free to move on as if nothing happened.

Embracing this idea of a warning as a courtesy is not only better for your students, and far more effective than seeing it in a punitive sense, but it also makes keeping your cool a lot easier.

Even, natural.

You no longer have to fret, sigh, harrumph, convince, coerce, question, glare, or otherwise make a show of your displeasure when a student misbehaves.

You just do what you promised and get on with your lesson.

How they feel about receiving a warning isn't your concern. Simply allow it to soak in and worm its way into that part of them that knows right from wrong and recalls what does and doesn't constitute breaking your class rules.

**Let it do its good work without your interference.** (You'll only muck it up.)

This approach will result in greater maturity, independence, and willingness to accept responsibility. It promotes reflection and contrition and causes less and less misbehavior over time, especially from your most challenging students.

Giving a warning then becomes no longer a stressful interaction, a grim-faced threat, or [a get out of jail free card](#).

It becomes a simple courtesy you offer your students. An act of grace, trust, respect, and expectation that they *will* fix the problem.

All on their own.