



How To Make Your Classroom A Safe Haven For Your Students

We know about the public cases, those gossiped about so offhandedly – the homeless student, the one whose mother is in jail, the two with drug dealing fathers no longer around.

But what of the others? What of the secrets hidden and locked away, keys all but resting on an ocean floor?

What about the shy boy seated near the front who won't look you in the eye? He appears well taken care of – clean clothes, hair moussed, new sneakers.

But what you don't see is waiting for him at home. What you don't see are the drunken rants, the assaults on his self-worth, and the emotional pain he carries with him like a war wound.

The truth is, despite our vigilance, we don't know what happens when our students leave our classroom. We don't know of the hurt, the fear, and the sadness some wear slung over their shoulders like a heavy backpack.

They put on a good face, these heroic students, and bury their secrets well. And although we can't always know the challenges they face, we can make sure our classroom is a welcome shelter from the storm.

We can make sure our classroom is a place where our students can exhale and know they're loved, wholly protected, and free to learn and enjoy school without looking over their shoulder.

We can make our classroom a safe haven.

Here's how:

Rely on schedules, routines, and procedures.

Knowing what is expected of them during every moment of the school day is a great comfort to students. It allows them to let down their guard and get lost in the steady pace and flow of a well-run classroom. As much as possible, follow the same daily schedule and rely on **well-taught routines and procedures**.

Maintain a clean, organized classroom.

An attractive room environment speaks volumes to your students about how you value respect, work habits, and expected behavior. When they enter your classroom they should feel as if they're walking into a world that makes sense, in stark contrast to the choppy, churning waters many navigate during their daily lives.

Be the same teacher yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Inconsistency in word, behavior, or action is confusing to students and will deeply affect their trust in you. It causes resentment, low motivation, and misbehavior. It also brings tension and unhappiness to your classroom and sends the message that you're yet another adult that can't be counted on.

Be kind.

It's so simple but means so much. Treat every student with kindness, patience, and gentleness – regardless of how difficult at times that can be. Doing this one thing will send **your likeability** through the roof, allow you to build easy rapport with your students, and make your classroom as welcoming as the smell of turkey on Thanksgiving.

Protect your students from misbehavior.

This is key to creating a classroom your students look forward to coming to every day. They must feel safe and comfortable working with and sitting next to any and all of their classmates. Every day they come to school they should feel confident in knowing that they'll be able to enjoy their day without being interrupted, bothered, or bullied.

Don't take misbehavior personally.

Teachers who yell, threaten, use sarcasm, or otherwise take misbehavior personally are disliked and distrusted intensely – though often privately – by students. They're also *least* likely to follow a classroom management plan – which would allow them to demand the highest standards of behavior without causing friction with students.

Maintain a peaceful learning environment.

Few students do well in a tension-filled classroom, but those with difficult lives outside of school have a particularly rough time – often shutting down, staring off into space, or engaging in serious misbehavior. A classroom is only as peaceful as the teacher in charge. You set the tone with your **calm presence**, even reactions, and pleasant attitude.

A Safe Haven

The world is becoming more seductive and more dangerous to our students than ever before, all but dragging them away from the academic skills, moral character, and standards of behavior they need to lead meaningful, successful lives.

But we can fight back.

We *can* compete with the excesses of the world. We *can* help our students overcome their sometimes awful, painful home lives.

When you become an expert in classroom management, you're not only able to create the classroom *you* really want, but you're able to create one that's best for your students.

You're able to create a classroom they love being part of and look forward coming to every day, a classroom where they can build genuine friendships, grow responsible and independent, and accelerate academically.

You're able to create a classroom free of worry, fear, and negative stress.

You're able to create a safe haven for your students.

Note: If you don't have a copy of *Dream Class*, now is a good time.

Amazon.com is currently discounting the book 24%. For details, [click here](#).

Also, if you haven't done so already, please join us. It's free! [Click here](#) and begin receiving classroom management articles like this one in your email box every week.