

Pennsylvania's
Schoolwide
Positive Behavior
Interventions and
Supports System:

Behavioral Expectations



Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports: Behavioral Expectations

This publication is dedicated to the fifth critical feature of an effective schoolwide behavior system, “Clearly defined behavioral expectations.”

Traditional approaches to behavior management have generally focused on telling students what **not** to do. A Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) approach shifts the focus to telling students what they are expected to do. During the course of a day, students may be in one or more classrooms, traveling in the hallways, eating lunch in the cafeteria, at an assembly, in the bus line, in a common area, or on the playground or field. The expected behavior in each of these settings may vary. Moreover, each member of the school personnel may have expectations that fall somewhere on a continuum of what is acceptable. Lack of clear definitions and examples of expected behaviors in the various settings of the school may lead to confusion for both students and faculty and staff.

In a SWPBIS approach, school personnel collaborate to develop and define the expectations for all members of the school community in observable and measurable terms. When the staff reaches consensus on the expectations, then those expectations are explicitly taught to the students in each of the settings to which they apply. Creating, defining, and teaching a set of schoolwide expectations to all students lays the foundation for creating a positive school climate by acknowledging and celebrating students for meeting those expectations.

The development of an effective schoolwide behavior system requires the incorporation of nine critical features. They are:

1. Administrative leadership and continuous support
2. Faculty-staff acceptance of the effort
3. Team-based approval and implementation
4. Ongoing data-based planning and decision-making
5. Clearly defined behavioral expectations embodied within a location/setting matrix
6. Explicitly taught behavioral expectations
7. Ongoing recognition/reinforcement of desired behaviors
8. Clearly defined and consistently implemented systemic procedures for dealing with misbehavior
9. Family and community collaborative involvement

What is a “rules by location matrix?”

A rules by location matrix is a grid containing rules listed vertically and building locations listed horizontally. Each intersection of row and column produces a unique cell describing behavioral expectations based on a general rule for a particular building location (see Figure 1). For example, in Figure 3, the Pottsgrove Middle School grid produces the following result at the intersection of the rule “Be Safe” and the location “Hallways, Stairways”:

- “Walk in all areas”

- “Be aware of others around you as you use your locker”
- “Walk on the right side of the hallway and stairs”

How is a behavioral matrix developed?

There are several steps:

Step 1: Determine the building areas considered separate and distinct, for example, hallways and stairways, outdoor areas, cafeteria, restrooms, etc. In developing this list, it may be helpful to scrutinize the locations of previous office referrals.

Step 2: Create a list of specific misbehaviors observed in the identified areas.

Step 3: Create general categories into which the specific behaviors can be sorted. For example, the following discrete behaviors: “refusing to do assigned tasks,” “running in the halls,” “bringing electronic equipment to school,” “throwing food,” “dropping paper towels on the restroom floor,” and “using computer browsers to access restricted information,” could be subsumed under the general categories of: **Respect, Safety, Acting Responsibly, and Demonstrating Pride in Self and Others.**

Figure 1. General Matrix

	Location 1	Location 2	Location 3	Schoolwide
Expectation 1	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	Specific expectations that apply to the entire building
Expectation 2	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	Specific expectations that apply to the entire building
Expectation 3	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	What behavior looks and sounds like in this location	Specific expectations that apply to the entire building

Step 4: Next use the general categories and sort each behavior into an appropriate cell. An example of an initial sort appears on the matrix in Figure 2.

Step 5: Restate the behaviors of concern into positive action-based terms (see Figure 3).

Step 6: Combine a theme (or theme + school mascot) with your general behavior categories. For example, March

Elementary School adopted the theme “FAME” and used it as a framework around which to craft the language of each schoolwide rule: “Focus on Respect,” “Always act Safely,” “Make yourself Proud,” and “bE Responsible” (see Figure 4).

Step 7: Disseminate a draft matrix to your faculty and staff for review and revision.

Step 8: Incorporate staff feedback and revise your matrix into a final product.

Step 9: Publish the final results. Format examples include: electronic postings, photocopies, brochures, posters, banners, laminated cards. Regarding language, be aware of the reading levels of your audiences. For example, if yours is an elementary program with kindergarten and first grade students, consider using written language accompanied by icons, symbols, or pictures.

Figure 2. Sample Matrix

Location ⇒ ⇓ Expectation	Classroom	Cafeteria	Restrooms	Halls and Stairways	Schoolwide
Respect	“Refusing to do assigned tasks”			“Running in the halls”	“Bringing electronic equipment to school”
Safety		“Throwing food”			
Acting Responsibly			“Dropping paper towels on the floor”		
Demonstrating pride in self and others					“Using browser to access restricted information”

Pottsgrove Middle School, Pottsgrove School District Montgomery County, Pennsylvania

Figure 3.

	Hallways/Stairways	Classroom	Cafeteria	Bus	Bathrooms	Schoolwide/Policy
Be Safe	Walk in all areas. Be aware of others around you as you use your locker. Walk on the right side of the hallway and stairs.	Enter room quietly. Keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself. Follow directions the first time given.	Touch only your own food. Sit in your assigned seat. Request permission to leave the cafeteria. Wait for cue to be dismissed.	Walk directly to your bus. Remain seated in your assigned seat. Remain on sidewalk while waiting for bus (at school and in the community). Keep hands and items to yourself and inside the bus.	Use the facilities in an appropriate manner. Only enter the bathroom with a signed pass from a staff member. Leave books and belongings in the classroom.	Enter and exit the auditorium silently. Sit in the auditorium where directed. Remain quiet when expected during assembly performances. Sign out and in when leaving a classroom, with name and correct time.
Be Responsible	Move to destination efficiently. Know your schedule. Get materials for class when permitted. Use only your locker. Keep your combination secret. If you drop something, pick it up.	Come prepared with the materials required by each teacher. Find out what you missed within one day of missing class. Share your knowledge with the class by raising your hand and waiting to be called on before speaking. Be on time.	Pay for the food you take. Take up your tray when required. Dispose of trash in the provided receptacles. Secure your money after purchasing your lunch. Ask for a lunch slip when you don't have your money.	Keep food and drinks put away. Enter and exit bus in a timely manner. Enter and exit at your assigned stop. Be at the bus stop on time.	Dispose of trash in the provided receptacles. Do what you need to do and return to class as quickly as possible. Pay debts on time. Keep valuables and money secure. Have your pass to be out of class. Follow the building policy on electronic devices and the dress code.	Come to school every day on time. When absent, bring your note the next day. Pay debts on time. Keep valuables and money secure. Have your pass to be out of class. Follow the building policy on electronic devices and the dress code.
Be Respectful	Use your inside voice. Comply with personal displays of affection (PDA) guidelines.	Speak at appropriate times. Take care of school property assigned to you: textbooks, lockers, etc.	When bell rings, be silent. Use your inside voice. Exit as directed by staff.	Use inside voices. Follow adults' directions. Respect the property and space of others.	Honor the privacy of others. Use your inside voice. Report anything out of order to your teacher.	Stay in your personal space (rough house/PDA). Treat others how you <i>should</i> be treated. Use polite language with staff and students.
Be Positive	Speak politely and quietly to each other. Hold the door for other students/staff. Keep the hallways neat and clean.	Do your best work at all times. Support the accomplishments of your classmates.	Treat the cafeteria workers kindly. Move through the lines quickly. Make healthy food choices.	Be polite to the bus driver. Be polite to passengers in cars. Keep the bus neat and clean.	Wash your hands. Maintain personal hygiene.	Represent Pottsgrove with pride on field trips, athletic events, and other competitions. Applaud politely during assemblies. Stand during the pledge to the flag and moment of silence.

Figure 4.

March Elementary School "FAME" Framework

Focus on RESPECT



Kindergarten and First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade		
<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will use polite/kind words and actions.</p> <p>* I will take care of school property.</p> <p>* I will take turns and share with others.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will use polite/kind words and actions.</p> <p>* I will take care of school property.</p> <p>* I will take turns and share with others.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will use polite/kind words and actions.</p> <p>* I will take care of school property.</p> <p>* I will wait my turn.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will use polite/kind words and actions.</p> <p>* I will take care of school property.</p> <p>* I will wait my turn.</p>		
Special Classes	Hallway	Bathroom	Cafeteria	Playground	Bus
<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will follow directions the first time.</p> <p>* I will use proper manners and kind words.</p> <p>* I will work neatly and clean up after myself.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will take care of school property:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in the toilet • flush once • water in sink • four paper towel cranks 	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will raise my hand when I need something.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p> <p>* I will use my indoor voice to speak to the people in the same seat.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p>	<p>* I will keep my hands, feet and objects to myself.</p>

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Wolf, Governor



**Special thanks to the staffs at
F.A. March Elementary School, Easton, Pennsylvania, and
Pottsgrove Middle School, Pottstown, Pennsylvania
for sharing their behavior matrixes.**