

# The Calm Classroom • Secondary Toolkit

Six things to print and keep within reach. Not theory. The lines you say when a Year 9 squares up to you, the planner for your first month with a new group, the log that holds up if a sanction gets challenged, and the script that gets a student back in the room without either of you losing face.

Keep these by your planner or pinned inside a folder. They're meant to be reached for mid-lesson, not read in advance.

*If you only print one page, print the no-power-struggle card.*

## 1

# The no-power-struggle card

## When a student challenges you in front of the class

A challenge in front of thirty peers is rarely about the work. It's about status and an audience. Win the moment quietly and you keep both. The aim is to lower the temperature, give a clear choice, and move on. You deal with the rest later, in private, on your terms.

Say	Don't say
'I can see you're not happy. We'll sort it at the end.'	'How dare you speak to me like that.'
'You've got a choice here. Settle, or we talk outside.'	'Get out. Now.'
'I'm going to carry on. Come and find me after.'	'I'm not arguing with you.' (then arguing)
'Noted. Let's keep going.'	'Do you think you're funny?'
'Same expectation for everyone. Thanks.'	'You always do this.'

Drop your voice. The quieter you go, the less of a show there is to play to.

Give the choice once, then turn away and teach. Standing over a student waiting for compliance keeps the audience watching.

If it's a refusal, not a crisis, you don't need to win it now. Name the consequence calmly and follow your behaviour policy after the lesson. A clear, recorded follow-up beats a public showdown every time.

**The three moves, in order:** acknowledge, offer a choice, move on. If none of that lands and the student won't let the lesson continue, that's a removal, not a debate. Use your school's on-call or removal route.

## 2

# The first-few-weeks planner

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### Setting routines, expectations and relationships with a new group

The first month sets the ceiling for the year. Get the routines in early, while they're still reading you, and you spend the rest of the year topping up rather than rebuilding. Work through these week by week. Tick what you've actually done, not what you meant to.

#### Week 1 · Establish the basics

- Stand at the door. Greet every student as they come in, every lesson.
- Teach your start-of-lesson routine explicitly. Don't assume they know it.
- Set out three or four non-negotiables. Say them. Then show what they look like.
- Learn names fast. Use a seating plan from lesson one.
- Practise one routine until it's smooth (entry, or getting them quiet). Reteach if sloppy.

#### Week 2 · Make routines automatic

- Reteach any routine that slipped. Don't let week-one standards drift.
- Notice and name three students doing the right thing, by name, out loud.
- Have one short, calm word with anyone who tested a boundary last week.
- Check your seating plan is working. Move people if it isn't.

#### Week 3 · Build the relationships

- Find a non-behaviour reason to talk to your two trickiest students.
- Mark or feedback on one piece of work per student so they know you're watching.
- Log any repeat issues now, while the pattern is small (see tool 3).
- Make first contact home with one positive message, not just the problems.

#### Week 4 · Embed and review

- Review which routines stuck and which need reteaching. Reteach the weak one.
- Identify any student who may need more than classroom craft. Note who (see tool 4).
- Check in with your tutor team or head of department on shared groups.
- Decide your one priority for the next half-term: \_\_\_\_\_

Routines beat rules. A rule is a poster. A routine is what they do without being asked. Spend the time drilling routines now.



# 3

## The incident log template

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### A clean, factual, dated record

If a sanction gets challenged or a concern grows, this is what defends it. Facts, not feelings. Write what was said and done, not what you assumed. Fill a row as soon after the lesson as you can, while it's accurate. Keep it dry enough that a parent, your head of year, or a panel could read it.

Date / time	Student	Class / period	What happened (facts only)	Trigger / context	Sanction or response	Reported to
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Write quotes where you can. 'Student said: "make me"' is a fact. 'Student was aggressive' is a judgement someone can argue with.

Date and time every entry. An undated note is hard to rely on later.

Record the sanction against your school's behaviour policy, which is a legal requirement your school must have in place. If you used any physical intervention, that has its own recording route.

[🔗 Check your school's policy & current statutory guidance](#)

If in doubt, record. Written, dated, factual. A short note made on the day is worth more than a clear memory three weeks on.

# 4

## The 'is this one for the DSL?' prompt sheet

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### Behaviour issue, or safeguarding concern?

Most of what you handle is behaviour: yours to manage with sanctions, routines and a word home. Some of it isn't. The moment something makes you worried about a student's safety or welfare, it stops being a behaviour question. You don't weigh it up alone, you don't investigate, and you don't sit on it. You pass it to your Designated Safeguarding Lead.

*Manage as behaviour (your job):*

- Low-level disruption, answering back, off-task, refusal.
- Lateness, missing equipment, not following routines.
- One-off rudeness or a lost temper with no welfare flag behind it.

*Pass to the DSL (a possible safeguarding concern):*

- Something a student tells you, or you see, that worries you about their safety at home or elsewhere.
- A sudden, marked change: withdrawn, frightened, marks, going hungry, exhausted.
- Disclosure of harm, neglect, or anything that makes you uneasy and you can't explain away.
- A behaviour pattern that looks like it has a welfare cause underneath it.

Report a concern to your Designated Safeguarding Lead or a deputy DSL. Not directly to the police or children's social care, unless a child is in immediate danger, where you call 999 or children's social care straight away. Source: KCSIE 2025.

Don't promise confidentiality, and don't investigate before you report. Your job is to notice and pass it on. The DSL decides what happens next.

If in doubt, record what you saw or heard in the child's words, dated and factual, and tell the DSL the same day.

Who your DSL is, how your school logs concerns, and your school's exact thresholds sit in your setting's safeguarding policy and staff handbook. Find them before you need them.

[Check your school's policy & current statutory guidance](#)



# 5

## The three-way conversation planner

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### The meeting that puts you and the parent on the same side as the student

The student is in the room, not talked about behind their back. A tired, defensive parent isn't your enemy. They've often had this conversation before and braced for blame. Take blame off the table early and you free everyone to look at what changes next. Plan it before you walk in.

### Before the meeting

- Decide your one outcome. What does 'this went well' look like? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have two specific facts ready, dated, from your log. Not 'always' or 'never'.
- Find one genuine positive about the student to open with.
- Agree with yourself: you're not here to win, you're here to agree a next step.

### The conversation frame

**Open warm.** 'Thanks for coming in. I wanted [student] here so we sort this together.'

**One genuine positive:** \_\_\_\_\_

**The facts, plainly, from the log:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Turn to the student:** 'What's your read on it?' Then let them talk.

**To the parent:** 'What are you seeing at home?' \_\_\_\_\_

**Agree one change each:** what the student will do \_\_\_\_\_, what you'll do \_\_\_\_\_, what the parent will do \_\_\_\_\_

**Set the check-in.** A date to come back to it: \_\_\_\_\_

### Notes during the meeting

What the parent said: \_\_\_\_\_

What the student said: \_\_\_\_\_

What we agreed: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep the student in the room and ask them first. The point is to land them on the same side as both adults, not to put them on trial.

If the parent gets defensive, slow down and agree with what's true. 'You're right, school isn't always easy for him.' Defensiveness drops when it isn't met with more pressure.



## 6

# The reset script

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### Bringing a student back after a removal or a blow-up

Once a student has been removed or has lost it, the hard part isn't the sanction. It's the return. They're braced for a telling-off and ready to save face by kicking off again. A clean reset gives them a way back in that costs them no dignity. Keep it short, keep it private, keep it forward-looking.

**You:** 'Come in. Sit down. We're not going over the whole thing.'

**You:** 'That lesson didn't go how either of us wanted. Fair?'

*Student: (likely a shrug, or 'it wasn't my fault')*

**You:** 'I'm not after fault right now. I just want the next lesson to go better. So do you, I think.'

**You:** 'Here's the line: [one clear expectation]. That's it. Can you give me that?'

*Student: ('yeah' / 'suppose')*

**You:** 'Good. Clean slate from the next lesson. I mean it. I'll be glad to have you back.'

Do it privately, even ten seconds in the corridor. A reset done in front of the class becomes another performance.

*Do:*

- Keep it under a minute.
- Name one clear expectation, not a list of everything they did wrong.
- Offer the clean slate and mean it. Carrying a grudge into the next lesson restarts the whole thing.
- Greet them at the door next lesson as if it's a fresh start.

*Don't:*

- Relitigate the incident or demand a full apology before they can return.
- Reset in front of an audience.
- Say 'last chance'. It boxes you both in and you rarely mean it.
- Drop your standards out of relief that they came back. Same expectation, fresh start.

Any sanction still stands. The reset clears the air so the next lesson starts clean; the consequence stays. Record the incident and the sanction as normal (see tool 3).

