



This guide was produced by the Tennessee Behavior Supports Project at Vanderbilt University. This tip sheet was authored by Erica L. Mazur, Melissa C. Hine, Becky H. Shafer, Tara J. Lerner, Brooke C. Shuster, Blair P. Lloyd, and Erik W. Carter. For more information, visit <http://tennesseebsp.org>.



What are behavioral expectations?



Behavioral expectations pinpoint the behaviors that not only are

considered important for students to perform at school, but that reflect the values of the school community. Behavioral expectations should be clear, concise, memorable, and positively

stated. They should also be broad enough to apply across school settings, from classrooms and hallways to the cafeteria and school bus. Identifying a small number of expectations (3-5) makes them easier for students and staff to remember. Schools often personalize their expectations by connecting them to the school name or mascot. For example, Bramble Elementary calls their behavioral expectations “Bramble Behaviors.” They selected “Be Respectful, Be Responsible, and Be Safe” as their three behavioral expectations. These expectations are simple, memorable, and broad enough to encompass all desired behaviors at school. Bramble High School connected their expectations to the leadership qualities they teach to their students. They selected “Be Here, Be On Time, and Be Positive” and refer to these behaviors as “The Bramble Way.”

Why should we establish school-wide behavioral expectations?

Establishing school-wide behavioral expectations provides a consistent way to teach students what appropriate behavior looks like in each setting. We can no longer assume all students know the appropriate ways to behave, and expectations help all staff and students have the same understanding of what is appropriate behavior. This allows students to know exactly what is expected of them and creates a more predictable environment. When expectations are clearly visible, students are taught the expectations, get feedback on their performance, and are more likely to engage in desired behaviors (Simonsen, Fairbanks, Briesch, Myers, & Sugai, 2008). Promoting the expectations helps build a positive school culture.

Example Behavioral Expectations

- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Safe
- Be Ready
- Be Kind
- Be Organized
- Act Responsibly
- Be On Time
- Be a Leader
- Be Prepared
- Character
- Accountability
- Dedication
- Honesty
- Optimism
- Determination
- Excellence
- Safety
- Integrity





How should we establish our behavioral expectations?

After selecting 3-5 behavioral expectations, clearly define what each expectation looks like for every key setting in your school. A behavioral expectations matrix is one way to organize this information. The matrix lists each school setting and the behavioral expectations down the

side and across the top. Each box is used to describe how a specific expectation is applied in each school setting. Descriptions of expected behaviors should be stated positively and clearly defined. Only include 2-5 brief descriptions in each box. When developing your matrix, consider

identifying alternatives to common problems you see in each setting. For example, at Bramble Elementary running in the hallway was a common problem. Their team included “walk” and “stay with your line” as one way to “Be Safe” in the hallway.

Bramble Elementary • Behavioral Expectations Matrix

	BE SAFE	BE RESPECTFUL	BE RESPONSIBLE
CAFETERIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold tray with 2 hands • Keep food to self without sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use an inside talking voice • Use a napkin to clean self & spills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After getting lunch & all utensils, choose a seat & stay there • Dump tray & recycle milk carton in appropriate place
RECESS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use equipment appropriately • Keep hands & feet to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice good sportsmanship • Take turns & share equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line up when the bell rings • Put equipment away
HALLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay with line • Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands off walls • Be quiet in halls & commons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go directly to where you need to go • Look to your teacher for directions
ARRIVAL/ DEPARTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cross only at cross walk even when adults are present • Walk inside & outside on school grounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow directions of Safety Patrol members • Wait with a calm body & quiet voice in line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on time • Go directly to destination
CLASSROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep hands, feet, & objects to self • Walk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to speaker • Wait your turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow class rules at all times • Finish work
RESTROOM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use soap & water for washing hands • Keep restrooms clean & dry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honor privacy • Wait patiently for your turn 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flush toilet after use • Use quickly, then leave
GYM/PE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use equipment appropriately • Keep hands & feet to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow teacher directions • Take turns when sharing equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put equipment away • Keep valuables in safe & secure area
BUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stay in seat • Keep hands, feet, & objects to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a quiet voice • Follow bus driver directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to bus on time • Walk on and off quickly
ASSEMBLIES/ SPECIAL EVENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit correctly on floor (criss-cross applesauce) • Keep hands & feet to self 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sit quietly • Follow teacher & staff directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 A's of Audience: attend, appreciate, applaud, allow



Bramble High School • The Bramble Way

LOCATIONS EXPECTATIONS		HALLWAYS & LOBBY	BUS	CAFETERIA	CLASSROOMS	BATHROOMS
BE	HERE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be moving toward class when 1st Bell Rings • Stay on School Grounds once you arrive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the bus, walk directly to school & vice versa • Stay seated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow cafeteria guidelines • Have ID & money ready while in line 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend daily • Stay focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Straight there, straight back • Have a hall pass at the appropriate times
	ON TIME	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk directly to destination • Use locker to prepare & be ready to enter classroom 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrive before bus is scheduled to leave • Wait to leave for the bus until dismissed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get breakfast & return directly to class • Get lunch during 1st 15 minutes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be in the room when the 2nd bell rings • Ask for passes only at appropriate times • Wait for teacher to dismiss you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return to class promptly • Take care of business promptly
	POSITIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be considerate of school & other's property • Keep hands & feet to yourself • Use manners when speaking to others • Use conversational voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow bus rules • Respect other people's personal space 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have appropriate conversations with friends • Use free time productively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use appropriate language, tone, & volume • Use materials properly • Keep hands to yourself • Clean up • Show tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep bathrooms clean & graffiti-free • Use appropriate behavior & language • Respect each others privacy

How do we teach our behavioral expectations?

School teams can use their behavioral expectations matrix to develop lesson plans for each school setting. Creating school-wide lesson plans prevents each teacher from having to create their own lesson plans. It also allows for consistency when teaching the behavioral expectations to all students. However, classroom teachers do not need to be the only ones responsible for teaching the lessons. Some schools have students rotate through each setting as school staff teach the corresponding lesson plan. Schools should also create posters to display the behavioral expectations throughout the school and serve as visual reminders. It is important to periodically re-teach students the behavioral expectations during the year, and some schools have developed videos to help with re-teaching.





For Further Reading

OSEP Technical Assistance Center (n.d.). *Tier 1 case examples*. Retrieved from pbis.org

Rudder, S. (2016). *Positive behavior interventions and support in Knox County Schools: A preliminary study*. Retrieved from knoxschools.org

Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (2016). *Lessons from the field: Teaching the RTI²-B plan to schools*. [PDF document]. Retrieved from tennesseebps.org

Tennessee Behavior Supports Project (2016). *Supporting RTI²-B in middle Tennessee schools* [PDF document]. Retrieved from tennesseebps.org

U.S. Office of Special Education Populations (n.d.). *Supporting and responding to behavior: Evidence-based classroom strategies for teachers*. Retrieved from pbis.org

References

Simonsen, B., Fairbanks, S., Briesch, A., Myers, D., & Sugai, G. (2008). Evidence-based practices in classroom management: Considerations for research to Practice. *Education & Treatment of Children, 31*(3), 351-380.

Graphic services supported in part by EKS NICHD Grant U54 HD083211 to the Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development. vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu