Planned Discussion

## Purpose

To help students understand and address concerns associated with:

* Minor but potentially annoying misbehavior.
* Moderate misbehavior in the early stages.
* Chronic or severe concerns, as one part of a comprehensive plan.

## Types of behavior that may be positively affected

Often overlooked and under-utilized, this intervention has the potential of having a positive impact on just about any behavior, from physically dangerous acts to chronic crying to minor disruptiveness. With any child whose language skills are sufficient to be able to understand and participate, planned discussion should be tried. For a minor problem or in the early stages of a moderate problem, this intervention may be sufficient in and of itself. For severe or ongoing problems, discussion may be one part of a comprehensive plan to help the student.

## Rationale

* Could resolve misbehavior resulting from not knowing or understanding the teacher’s expectations.
* This is the easiest, quickest intervention.
* *Planned Discussion* is a very respectful and potentially empowering way to address problem behavior. It is not intended to be adversarial or confrontational.

## Summary of intervention steps

Although the following procedures are offered in a step-by-step format, it is important to use professional judgment in adjusting them to meet the needs of each situation and individual student.

**Step 1:** *Prepare to meet with the student.*

1. Identify the central concern.
2. Establish a focus (i.e., one or two target behaviors).
3. Determine who should participate in the discussion (no more than three adults).
4. Schedule the discussion for a neutral time (not immediately after an incident).
5. Make an appointment with the student to discuss the concern(s).
6. Plan to keep a written record of the discussion. See *What Happened* form on page 75 in book and *Discussion Record* form on page 80 of book and on page 3 of this handout.

**Step 2:** *Meet with the student.*

1. Work with the student to define the concern(s).
2. Brainstorm actions that each participant in the discussion can take to help the student resolve the concern(s).
3. Set up an informal action plan by selecting a couple of ideas that aren’t complicated and don’t require extensive time to implement.
4. Schedule a follow-up meeting within one to two weeks.
5. Conclude the meeting with words of encouragement and positive expectations.
6. If appropriate, share a copy of the written record of the meeting with the student and parents.

**Step 3:** *Follow up with the student.*

1. Encourage student’s efforts and provide positive verbal feedback.
2. Meet with the student weekly to discuss progress and adjust the action plan as necessary.
3. Determine whether more structured interventions are required.
4. Provide continued follow-up, support, and encouragement.

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