The Positive Discipline School

Using solution focused discipline to build a powerful learning community that models mutual respect and supports academic excellence.

> *We learn best from those with whom we are in caring, mutually respectful relationships that promote independence. Such supportive relationships enable students from diverse backgrounds to feel comfortable bringing their personal experiences into the classroom, discover their common humanity and feel as though they are viewed as assets to the school community.*
>
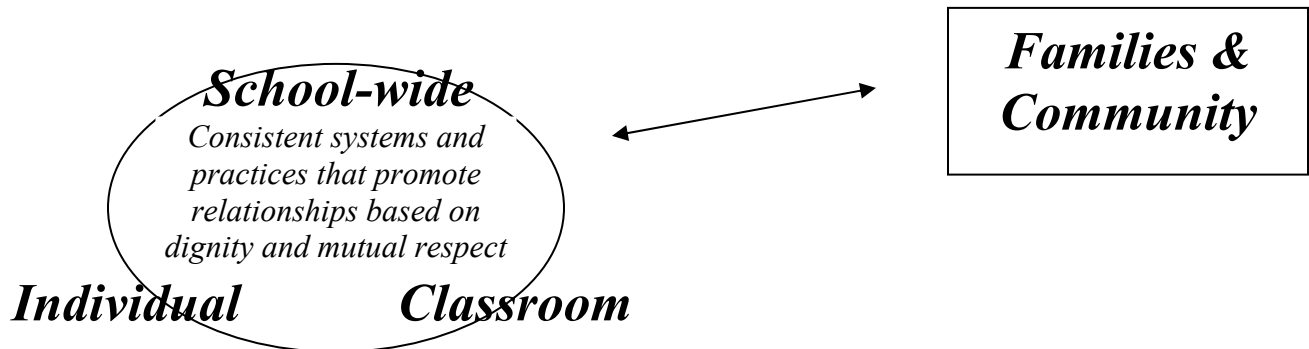> Learning First Alliance *Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools*

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We believe that schools have a critical choice to make in how we perceive and respond to student misbehavior. When we follow familiar and traditional practice, we often act in ways that contradict our fundamental mission—*to engage each student in high levels of learning.*

Two Opposing Schools of Thought on Human Behavior

	Dominant and Traditional Practice in American Schools	The Positive Discipline (Solution Focused) Approach
Who developed the theory?	Common practice Pavlov, Thorndike, Skinner	Adler, Driekurs, Glasser, Nelsen, Lott, Dinkmeyer
What motivates behavior?	People respond to rewards and punishments in their environment.	People seek a sense of belonging (connection) and significance (meaning) in their social context
When do we have the most influence on the behavior of others?	At the moment of response to a specific behavior.	In an ongoing relationship founded on mutual respect.
What are the most powerful tools for adults?	Control, rewards, and punishments	Empathy, understanding the perspective of the student, collaborative problem solving, kind AND firm follow through
"Respect" is…	Obedience and compliance in relationships in which dignity and respect of the adult is primary	Mutual, in relationships in which each person is equally worthy of dignity and respect
Response to inappropriate behavior	Censure, isolation, punishment	Naming without shaming and blaming, focus on solutions, follow through, addressing the belief behind the behavior
Response to dangerous and destructive behavior	Censure, isolation, punishment	Clear follow through without getting in the way of the student experiencing the consequence of their action.
Student learning is maximized when…	The adult has effective control over student behavior	The student feels belonging and significance in the classroom

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Building effective learning communities requires respectful relationships at all levels

School-wide
Consistent systems and practices that promote relationships based on dignity and mutual respect

Families & Community
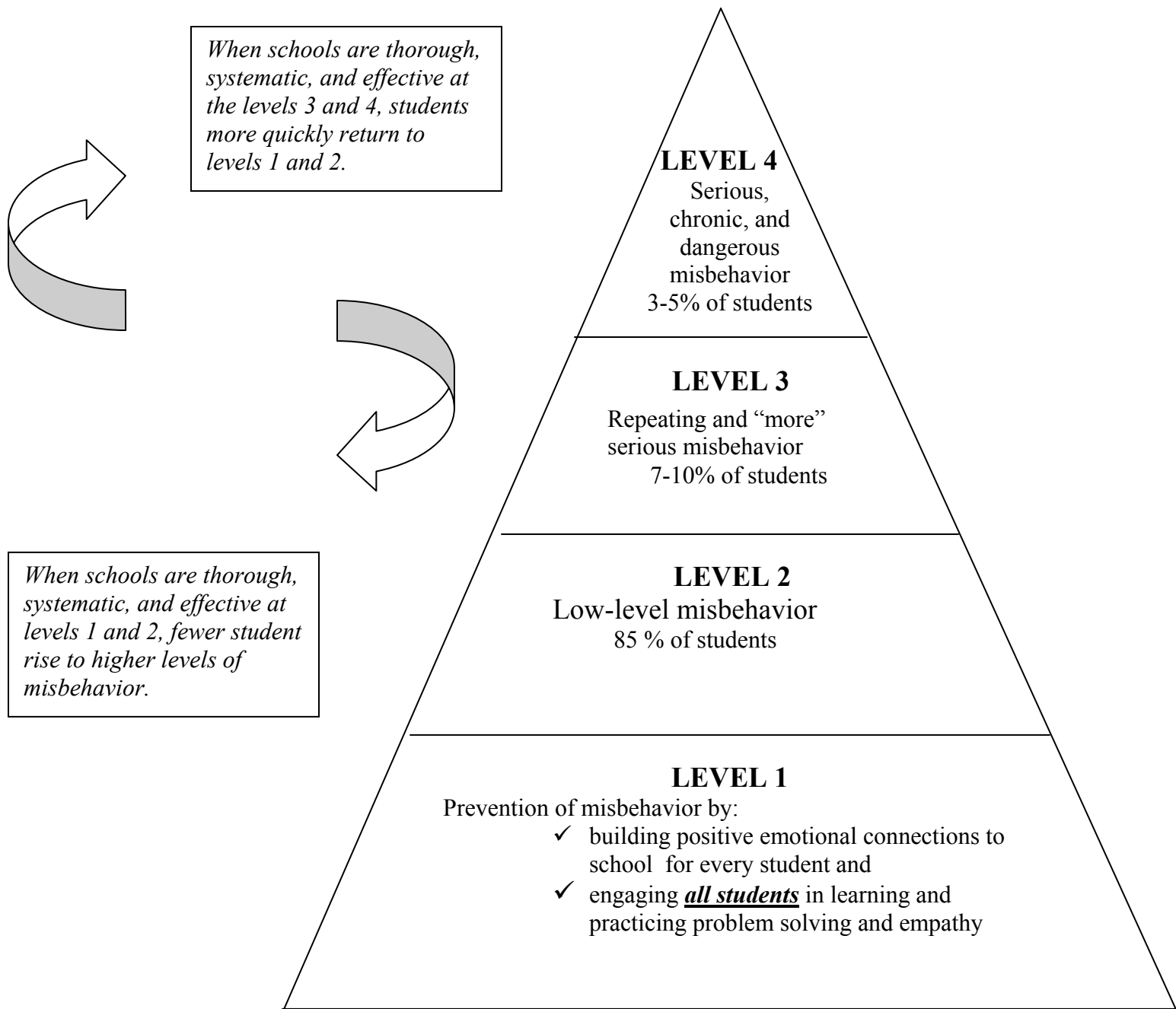
Individual   Classroom

Now our community of students, teachers and parents work to act in a respectful manner for a more effective academic environment. We now have the knowledge and skills to interact with each other in a way to support one other, thereby achieving a win/win situation. Before Positive Discipline at our school, respect was a word, now it is actions. --Elementary principal (School population: 45% free/reduced lunch)

In a Positive Discipline School, every adult…

- ✓ Understands that the quality of relationships and school climate are absolutely critical to successful student learning.

- ✓ Seeks to establish strong meaning and connection for students, families and staff in social and academic contexts.

- ✓ Implements principles of mutual respect and encouragement

- ✓ Focuses on long term, solutions to misbehavior at individual, class and school wide levels.

- ✓ Views mistakes as opportunities to learn and misbehavior as opportunities to practice critical life skills.

- ✓ Questions the tradition of adult control, rewards and punishments.

In a Positive Discipline School, Systems
Prevention, Early Intervention and Interventions

When schools are thorough, systematic, and effective at the levels 3 and 4, students more quickly return to levels 1 and 2.

LEVEL 4
Serious, chronic, and dangerous misbehavior
3-5% of students

LEVEL 3
Repeating and "more" serious misbehavior
7-10% of students

LEVEL 2
Low-level misbehavior
85 % of students

When schools are thorough, systematic, and effective at levels 1 and 2, fewer student rise to higher levels of misbehavior.

LEVEL 1
Prevention of misbehavior by:
- ✓ building positive emotional connections to school for every student and
- ✓ engaging *__all students__* in learning and practicing problem solving and empathy

Must Address Four Levels of Need:
for Moderate and Serious Misbehavior

Behavior	Tools
LEVEL 4 Chronic, dangerous, repeated, disruptive, unsolved	--Team assessment and problem solving that includes family --Focus on building connection and encouragement. --Intensive academic support --Intensive social skills building --Respectfully and appropriately not interfering with students experiencing the consequences of their actions. --Agreements and consistent follow through ***…and more.***
LEVEL 3 Disruptive, hurtful, conflict generating	--Intensive social skills building --Increased academic support --Problem solving to address belief behind the behavior --Agreements and consistent follow through --Non-punitive methods to "make amends" by contributing to the school --Classroom meetings ***…and more***
LEVEL 2 Low level annoying and mildly disruptive	--Seeing mistakes as opportunities to learn --Non-punitive responses to misbehavior --Effective school-wide practice for looking at "system problems" --classroom meetings ***…and more***
LEVEL 1 Learning and practicing problem solving and social skills	--Opportunities for meaningful learning and involvement of students. --School-wide focus on mutual respect and responsibility --School-wide focus on academics *and* building social skills --Effective engagement of students in setting school and classroom guidelines --Classroom meetings ***…and more.***

Research suggests that comprehensive approaches to school discipline emphasize teaching appropriate behavior (not just punishing), matching the level of intervention to the level of behavioral challenge posed by each student, and designing integrated systems that deal with a full range of discipline challenges.

Learning First Alliance *Every Child Learning: Safe and Supportive Schools*

A Successful Positive Discipline School

STANDARD	BEFORE implementation	Year 1
The school recognizes that learning occurs when the school has a simultaneous focus on school climate and academic instruction.	A focus on both academic achievement and discipline/school climate are included in the first three school-wide goals.	The school sets short term benchmarks for both academic achievement and discipline/school climate. Data is collected and progress assessed.
Discipline policies and procedures: ✓ **are clear and well understood by all members of the school community.** ✓ **focus on teaching skills rather than sorting and separating students.** ✓ **are founded on respect and dignity.**	The school discipline manual is reviewed and a process is established for ensuring consistency with the goals and principles of Positive Discipline.	School discipline practices are targeted to address 3 levels: a) Prevention and social skills instruction/practice for all students b) Early intervention and problem solving with clear follow through in all classrooms, lunchroom, playground, office, etc. c) Intervention of multi-disciplinary team problem solving and management for the smaller number of chronic, challenging behavior. School discipline manual is revised to be consistent with Positive Discipline as well as school and district policies.
The school provides the resources necessary to support its intended goals.	Identify and allocate resources for 3 years. This includes time and money for training as well as time and money for information management.	Full staff training and follow-up (total 21 hours) for the first year. Training of staff or community person in parent education.
The school philosophy is explicit about respect and dignity for every member of the school community.	Discussion about school wide discipline and school climate have included the school staff. Becoming a Positive Discipline school has 80% or greater staff buy in.	The parent community is invited into the discussion about the steps of changing the discipline policies. Focus is on the common goals of a safe, respectful learning environment for all students.
The school is committed to putting "theory into practice" in a step wise fashion.	School leadership and majority of staff commit to systematic implementation of Positive Discipline long term.	By end of year regular class meetings in each classroom. Non-permissive, non-punitive tools become primary system for teaching appropriate social skills. Staff meetings are based on the class meeting format.
The school is committed to continuous improvement of individual actions and systems through: ✓ **Data collection** ✓ **Evaluation and reflection** ✓ **Data-based decision making.**	Multi-disciplinary behavior support team exists, meets at least monthly and will review referral data each month. Clear system in place for collecting and monitoring student behavior data. Staff time is allocated daily for entering data, so that data is current to within a week at all times.	Implementation of the data collection system with at least monthly meetings of support team to review progress. The behavior support team focuses on strengths and solutions. Use final review to begin to benchmarks for following year.

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Requires Systematic Preparation and Implementation

Year 2	Year 3	Ongoing Follow up and Evaluation
Continued setting benchmarks, collecting data, monitoring and adjusting implementation.	Continued setting benchmarks, collecting data, monitoring and adjusting implementation.	Consider "model school" status.
Use of data to review effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary.	Use of data to review effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary.	Use of data to review effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary.
5 hours (minimum) of PD follow up. Training for new staff available.	5 hours (minimum) of PD follow up. Training for new staff available.	Follow up from certified trainers is available, but experienced teachers in the school now do mentoring. Training for new staff available.
Parent education available for parents. Begin assessment of how to engage families and other community members. Planning for parent peer groups.	Parent education available for parents. Continue to assess and take steps family and community engagement. Parent peer groups begin.	Parent education available for parents. Continue to assess and take steps toward family and community engagement. Parent peer groups in all grades.
Regular student led classroom meetings. Student government uses the class meeting process to take on real and meaningful problems. Regular teachers helping teachers problem solving sessions.	Regular student led classroom meetings. Student government uses the class meeting process to take on real and meaningful problems. Regular teachers helping teachers problem solving sessions.	Regular student led classroom meetings. Student government uses the class meeting process to take on real and meaningful problems. Regular teacher helping teacher sessions.
Implementation of the data collection system with at least monthly meetings of support team to review progress. Behavior support team focuses on strengths and solutions. Using data reviews effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary. Use the end of year review to assess progress and to target goals for following year.	Continue data collection system with at least monthly meetings of support team to review progress. Behavior support team focuses on strengths and solutions. Using data reviews effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary. Use the end of year review to assess progress and to target goals for following year.	Continue data collection system with at least monthly meetings of support team to review progress. Behavior support team focuses on strengths and solutions. Using data reviews effectiveness of all three levels of approach and modifies/gains further training as necessary. Use the end of year review to assess progress and to target goals for following year.

> *"Instead of ignoring the problem I sat down with him and went over an exercise with him. He learned how to do it. He felt better about himself. I started to interact with him as a human being instead of a problem… He started to feel better about himself and the antagonism between us has dissipated. In just a few weeks his behavior has improved dramatically."* --High school teacher

For additional Information:

The Positive Discipline Association (a 501c3 non profit corporation): www.posdis.org

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Books:

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Positive Discipline: A Teachers A-Z Guide, Jane Nelsen, Linda Escobar, Kate Ortolano, Roslyn
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Sugai, G, Sprague J.R, Horner, R.H., Walker, H.M. Preventing School Violence: The Use of Office
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> *Research also shows that building a sense of community in schools is an integral part of creating a positive learning environment. Community building begins on the first day students and teachers come together. It is here that social and emotional learning can be integrated into classroom life. Here, social emotional learning is seen not as an add-on for the teacher but the way that relationships, routines, and procedures are established so everyone feels cared for, respected, and valued.*
>
> Jacqueline A. Norris, "Looking at Classroom Management Through
> a Social and Emotional Learning Lens"

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