

Dealing With Defiance

Dealing with a student who is defiant takes all the strength a teacher can muster. When confronting this type of behavior, taking a closer look at what makes up a defiant child is necessary.

When looking at the term defiance, we are referring to an outright refusal of the student to obey the teacher. In most cases, this defiance is not meant as an attack toward the teacher personally, but an outburst caused by being childish or immature. Also, it can be a revolt against adults and authority in general.

The child may be under severe pressure due to causes outside the classroom or have a low self-esteem due to poor performance in school.

There is a need for understanding, and understanding takes time. Your first concern should be to find out why the student has suddenly become defiant.

When the problem of the defiant student comes about, there are some tips in handling the confrontation.

1. By no means should you fly into a rage. Keep your cool and think. Avoid a head-on collision with the student. Try to talk the student out of his/her problem through humor or a smile. Give the student some slack to work out the problem and comply with your request.
2. Underreact rather than overreact. Do not have a show down. If the defiance is minor, try to temporarily forget the whole thing. When the heat of the battle has subsided, take time to have a quiet, private talk with the student to ensure that the problem is not repeated.
3. If you think that your authority would be greatly undermined if you overlook the defiance, deal with the situation in a calm and kind manner. If the problem persists, call in other people for help such as the guidance counselor or principal.
4. If the defiance reaches the point where the use or threat of physical violence or destructiveness is a real possibility, call the principal without delay.
5. Make sure that your request is reasonable, so that the student does not have a reason for the defiance.

Remember, when dealing with a defiant student, one must first look into the cause of the defiance to ensure that the problem is solved.