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# How to manage a confrontation and stop it from escalating

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**Discuss choices** - Clearly and calmly explain the behaviours which you observed, how they relate to the classroom plan and that the student has made a 'poor choices' so far. Tell the student that you want them to make better choices. You are then focusing on the behaviours and the student is less likely to feel personally attacked.

**Don't chase secondary behaviours** - Focus on the behaviour you are correcting and do not discuss anything else. If the student tries to divert you tell them that you understand what they are saying but they still have a consequence/need to make better choices in their behaviour

**Plan you interaction** - Make sure that you take a moment to structure what you are going to say and keep to that 'script'. Think carefully about your verbal and non-verbal communication. Enjoy the skill of being able to stay in control of the confrontation.

**Don't bring up past misdemeanours** - Focus on the single, identifiable behaviour which you have seen. All students start each class with a clean sheet.

**Remember that you are the adult** - Losing your temper will leave you exposed. Try and see the interaction for what it is – an adult helping a child to learn about behaviour and make better choices.

**Get on their level physically** - If they are seated, try kneeling or bending over, rather than standing over them.

**Avoid negative comments on cultural styles** - Students should be allowed to dress themselves and their hair within the agreed limits of the school's dress code and to move as they please if this does not encroach on the space of others

**Respect students personal space** - Students may feel threatened and become agitated if their personal space is constantly violated. This does not mean, however, that teachers should ignore bad behaviour.

**Use friendly gestures, not aggressive ones** - Avoid pointing the finger. Open hands with upturned palms are less threatening

**Use student's preferred name** - Ask each student how he/she would like to be addressed in the classroom and then respect that preference

**Ask questions rather than make accusations** - Assume that the student is a responsible person. "Are you ready to begin?" is less confrontational than: "Put your magazine away. It's time to start class", especially spoken in a concerned and kind tone.

**Deal with the behaviour problem in private** - Reprimanding or 'shaming' students in front of their peers causes unnecessary embarrassment. Speaking to them privately respects their dignity and self-esteem.

**Listen carefully when students speak** - Remain open-minded and objective. Consider the messages of students carefully. Avoid interrupting them or offering unsolicited advice or criticism.