

Why Have Rules?

SPHE STRANDS:

Myself and Others – Myself and my family – Myself and other people – Relating to others

Myself and the Wider World – Developing citizenship – Living in the local community

Rules, rules, rules!

Invite the children, in groups of three or four, to come up with three rules they think are most important in the playground each day. They might include areas for each class to play, what games are allowed, which classes are allowed to do what, whether it's ok to argue or fight or climb walls, etc. Then, lead a class discussion on which rules are agreed on by the majority. Children must listen respectfully to each other. Encourage them to ask questions such as 'What if...?' or 'What would happen if..?'

The end result, i.e. which rules are agreed upon, is not as important here as the process of discussing respectfully and discussing the pros and cons of the rules they feel are important.

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Consequences

In the light of the above discussion, invite the children to consider what would happen if there were no consequences for those who break rules? Would anyone bother keeping them? Why or why not? Would the school yard be a happy, safe place?

Simon Says

To illustrate this point have a short game of Simon Says with the class. Teacher acts as 'Simon' and gives the children instructions such as 'Put your hands on your head' or 'Sit on the floor', etc. However, if someone gets it wrong they are not out. After about five minutes, ask the children, 'What is wrong with this game?' There are no consequences, so the game can't progress or end. What would it be like if a soccer game had no rules? What would the roads be like if there were no rules of the road?

Acrostic Poem

Ask the children to write an acrostic poem about rules. Here's an example:

Rules are for keeping.

Understand that they are there for a reason.

Learn to obey them

Every single day

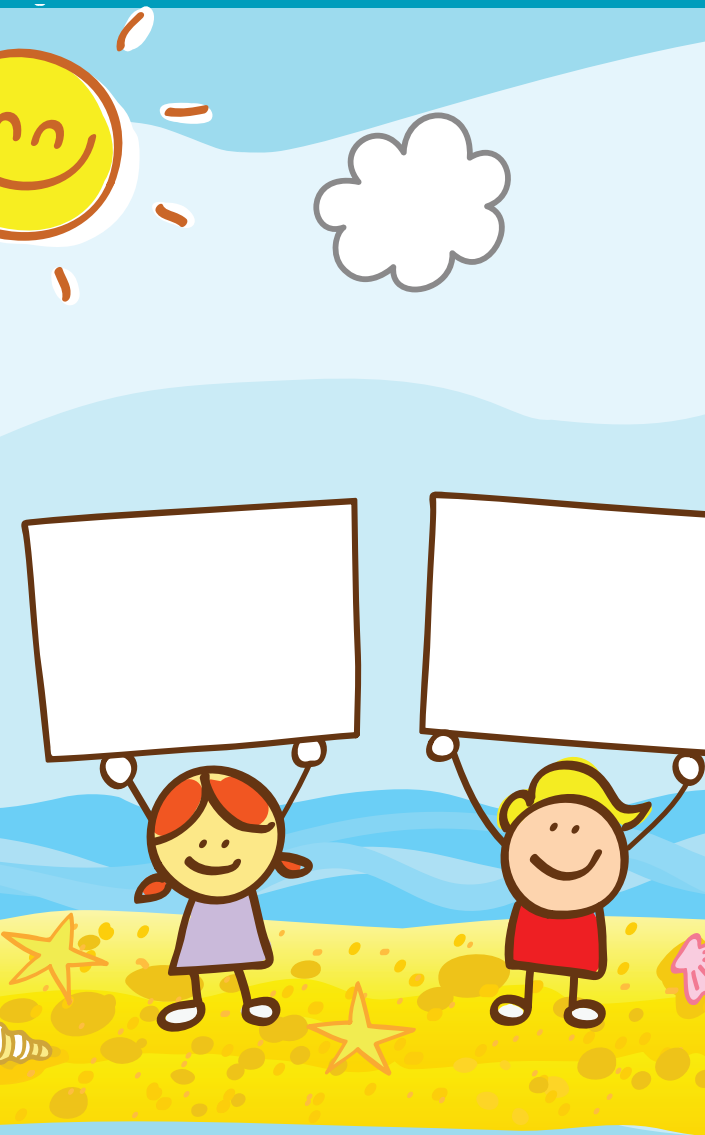
So everyone is safe and happy.

School Rules

This would be a good time to photocopy the school rules and to discuss not only what they are, but why we need each one to protect everyone's safety and rights.

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Reflection:

Invite the children to close their eyes and read the following reflection:

We all want to feel safe and happy in school. To do this we need to have rules and there must be consequences for those who break them. We want to know that we won't be hurt or bullied in school. We want to have a quiet classroom where we can learn. We need to know that it's not ok for someone to hurt or insult us.

We have a responsibility to keep the rules too. We need to respect other people's property and other people's feelings. We have to obey the instructions of the teachers so other children can learn.

Rules are everywhere: on the road, in car-parks, in playgrounds, at the cinema. There are laws in our country that make sure we are safe and protected.

We thank God for those who make the rules that keep us safe. We ask God's help to try to keep the rules. We also ask God's help to accept the consequences when we fail to keep the rules and to try harder next time.

We also make decisions because we know they are the right thing to do. We try to reach out to people who are lonely. We speak nicely to others. We decide to share our toys with others. We don't take things that are not ours, even if we could get away with it. We help elderly and sick people.

Sometimes it is easier to make a bad choice. We ask God's help to have the courage to make good choices as much as possible. We also ask God to help us to admit when we are wrong and to try to make up for any bad decisions we make. Amen.