

# Pennsylvania's Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports System:

## Defining and Managing Challenging Behaviors





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The development of an effective schoolwide behavior system requires the incorporation of nine critical features. They are:

1. Administrative leadership and continuous support
2. Faculty-staff acceptance of the effort
3. Team-based approval and implementation
4. Ongoing data-based planning and decision-making
5. Clearly defined behavioral expectations embodied within a location/setting matrix
6. Explicitly taught behavioral expectations
7. Ongoing recognition and reinforcement of desired behaviors
8. **Clearly defined and consistently implemented systemic procedures for dealing with misbehavior**
9. Family and community collaborative involvement

This publication focuses on the eighth critical feature of an effective schoolwide behavior system, **“Clearly defined and consistently implemented systemic procedures for dealing with misbehavior.”**

In a traditional approach to responding to challenging behavior, teachers send students to the office for a range of behaviors that differs across teachers. For example, a student curses in a classroom after receiving a low grade on an assignment. One teacher may send that student to the office immediately, but another teacher may privately review the “Be Respectful” expectation with the student and only send the student to the office if the behavior is repeated that day. In addition, office faculty may respond to referrals in a variety of ways. In the previous scenario, the principal may engage in a problem-solving process with the student, after which the student is permitted to return to class. On the other hand, the assistant principal may give the student a written demerit for a language violation. Either way, once the behavior is “dealt with,” the office discipline referral form is frequently filed away. The goal of Schoolwide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS) is to design a system that will address all of these concerns and use the office referral form information as a source of data that can be used to solve problems on schoolwide, classwide, and individual levels.

When implementing a system of SWPBIS, office discipline referral information, as well as other student data (e.g., detentions, suspensions, attendance,

tardiness, serious incidents), is used to monitor the effectiveness of the universal level of support and more effectively target tier 2 and tier 3 supports to the students that need them. These data are used within a problem-solving process to evaluate the effectiveness of current practices, as well as to make decisions regarding potential new practices to improve student outcomes.

In a SWPBIS approach, school personnel collaborate to identify challenging behaviors and categorize them into either teacher-managed or office-managed behavior. They then develop procedures for managing both types of behavior. School personnel use this information to edit their office discipline referral form and create a list of definitions for behaviors that fall into both categories. Providing explicit definitions is an essential step in the process because it will ensure that every person in the school is documenting and responding to behavior in the same manner. This consistency across observers is important to ensure that the data accumulated in a school represents accurate information. Without accurate data, interventions may not be effective. Most importantly, identifying which behaviors are teacher versus office managed will make expectations clear to the faculty, staff, and students.

# Developing a System of Defining and Managing Challenging Behaviors

Adapted from *Team Time Implementation Workbook*, [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org).

**Step 1:** Use a T-chart to list **behaviors** observed in the school setting and to determine whether they are teacher managed versus office managed.

## Elementary School Example

Teacher-Managed Behavior	Office-Managed Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/tardy – Inform parents of effect on academic performance</li> <li>• Profanity directed at another student</li> <li>• Gum chewing</li> <li>• Homework</li> <li>• No supplies</li> <li>• Tattling</li> <li>• Noncompliance</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Lying</li> <li>• Minor stealing</li> <li>• Cheating</li> <li>• Dress code violations</li> <li>• Minor harassment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/tardy</li> <li>• Vandalism</li> <li>• Substances</li> <li>• Defiance</li> <li>• Weapons</li> <li>• Profanity directed at adults</li> <li>• Major disruptions</li> <li>• Fighting</li> <li>• Verbal/physical intimidation</li> <li>• Major stealing</li> <li>• Cutting school</li> <li>• Wanderers</li> <li>• Gang-related activity</li> <li>• Chronic dress code violation</li> <li>• Harassment (including sexual)</li> </ul>

## Secondary School Example

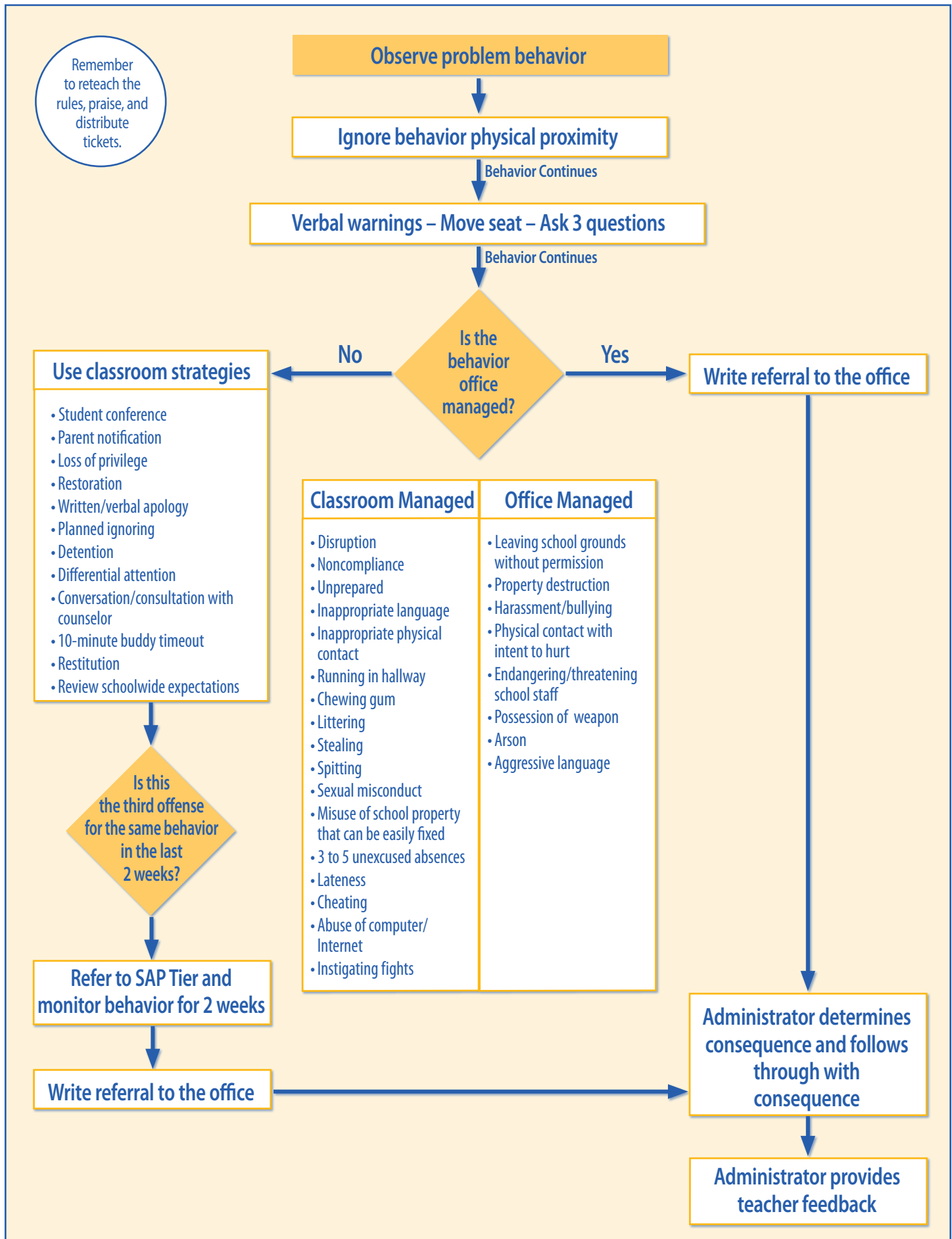
Teacher-Managed Behavior	Office-Managed Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/tardy – Inform parents</li> <li>• Excessive talking</li> <li>• Drinks/food/gum (with clear expectation for your class)</li> <li>• Missing homework</li> <li>• Not prepared for class</li> <li>• Inappropriate language</li> <li>• Lying</li> <li>• Dishonesty</li> <li>• Dress code violation</li> <li>• Public display of affection</li> <li>• Hallway disruption</li> <li>• Passing notes</li> <li>• Cheating/plagiarism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance/tardy</li> <li>• Insubordination</li> <li>• Fighting</li> <li>• Vandalism</li> <li>• Verbal/Physical intimidation</li> <li>• Weapons</li> <li>• Gang representation</li> <li>• Cutting class</li> <li>• School/teacher detention</li> <li>• Theft</li> <li>• Drug Violation</li> <li>• Directed profanity</li> <li>• Arson</li> <li>• Harassment</li> <li>• Controlled substances</li> <li>• Threats</li> <li>• Security threat/breach</li> <li>• Lewd notes</li> <li>• Repeated/severe offenses</li> </ul>

**Step 2:** Use a T-chart to list **consequences** for teacher- and office-managed behaviors.

## Consequences Example

Teacher-Managed Behavior	Office-Managed Behavior
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned ignoring</li> <li>• Differential attention</li> <li>• Physical proximity</li> <li>• Signal/nonverbal cue</li> <li>• Redirect</li> <li>• Reteach specific expectations</li> <li>• Provide choice</li> <li>• Student conference</li> <li>• Time out</li> <li>• Seat change</li> <li>• Parent contact</li> <li>• Loss of privilege</li> <li>• Assign time owed</li> <li>• Verbal or written apology</li> <li>• Restitution</li> <li>• Consultation with counselor</li> <li>• Problem solving</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of privilege</li> <li>• Individual instruction</li> <li>• Conference with student</li> <li>• Detention/time out of class</li> <li>• Parent contact</li> <li>• Bus suspensions</li> <li>• In-school suspension</li> <li>• Out-of-school suspension</li> </ul>

**Step 3:** Create a flow chart that explains the procedure for dealing with teacher-managed behaviors and office-managed behaviors.



**Step 4:** Review and, if necessary, edit your current **office discipline referral** form so that minor and major challenging behavior are accurately listed. In addition, make sure the following information is included on the form: student's name, grade, date, referring person's name, time, others involved, location, possible motivation, and consequence.

Office Referral Form		
<b>Name:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____ <b>Teacher:</b> _____ <b>Grade:</b> K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 <b>Referring Staff:</b> _____	<b>Location:</b> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Playground  <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria  <input type="checkbox"/> Hallway  <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom  <input type="checkbox"/> Library               </div> <div> <input type="checkbox"/> Bathroom                  A B C  <input type="checkbox"/> Arrival/ Dismissal  <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____               </div> </div>	
<b>Minor Problem Behavior</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate language <input type="checkbox"/> Physical contact <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance <input type="checkbox"/> Disruption <input type="checkbox"/> Dress code <input type="checkbox"/> Property misuse <input type="checkbox"/> Tardy <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic violation <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>Major Problem Behavior</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Abusive language <input type="checkbox"/> Fighting/physical aggression <input type="checkbox"/> Defiance/disrespect <input type="checkbox"/> Harrassment/bullying <input type="checkbox"/> Dress code <input type="checkbox"/> Inappropriate display of affection <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic violation <input type="checkbox"/> Lying/cheating <input type="checkbox"/> Skipping class <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	<b>Possible Motivation</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain peer attention <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain adult attention <input type="checkbox"/> Obtain items/activities <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid peer(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid adult <input type="checkbox"/> Avoid task or activity <input type="checkbox"/> Don't know <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>Administrative Decision</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Loss of privilege <input type="checkbox"/> Time in office <input type="checkbox"/> Conference with student <input type="checkbox"/> Parent contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Individualized instruction <input type="checkbox"/> In-school suspension (____ hours/days)	<input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-school suspension (____ days) <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
<b>Others involved in incident:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> Peers <input type="checkbox"/> Staff <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher <input type="checkbox"/> Substitute <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____		
<b>Other comments:</b> _____ _____ _____		
<b>Parent Signature:</b> _____ <b>Date:</b> _____		
All minors are filed with the classroom teacher. Three minors equal a major. All majors require administrator consequence, parent contact, and signature.		

**Step 5:** Create a list of **definitions** for each challenging behavior on the office discipline referral form. Be sure the definitions are observable and measurable. For example, noncompliance could be defined as "failure to respond to adult directions."



# **Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

**Tom Wolf, Governor**

