



Strategies to De-Escalate Challenging Student Behaviors

1. Stay Calm and Composed

Maintain a steady, relaxed tone and body language. Your calm presence helps students feel safe and supported.

"Your calm is contagious."

2. Build Positive Rapport

Connect with the student through empathy and respect. Use their name and acknowledge their feelings.

"I see you're upset. I'm here to help."

3. Practice Active Listening

Give your full attention. Let them speak without interruption. Reflect back what you hear to show understanding.

"It sounds like you're frustrated because..."

4. Give Clear, Simple Instructions

Use short, direct sentences. Break tasks into manageable steps to reduce overwhelm.

"First, take a deep breath. Then, let's walk to the quiet area."

5. Offer Choices and Control

Provide options to empower the student and reduce resistance.

“Would you like to sit here or over there to calm down?”

6. Use Non-Verbal Communication

Use calm gestures, open posture, and a soft facial expression to reinforce your message.

A gentle nod or open hands can say a lot.

7. Use De-Escalation Techniques

Encourage calming strategies like deep breathing, counting, or using a quiet space.

“Let’s take five deep breaths together.”

8. Ensure a Safe Environment

Remove distractions or potential triggers. Keep the space calm and predictable.

Safety first—for everyone involved.

9. Know When to Ask for Help

If the situation escalates beyond your control, seek support from colleagues or administrators.

“I need backup to ensure everyone stays safe.”