

Why Do Students Misbehave?

www.bryan-harris.com

Effective teachers know that in order to truly help a student to change an inappropriate behavior, they have to get to the root causes and consider the core of the problem (Waller, 2008). When confronted with an inappropriate student behavior, the most effective teachers ask themselves one question, “*How can I help to prevent this from happening again?*” Teachers should consider not only the most effective consequence but also what strategies should be utilized to help prevent future occurrences. Punishment alone rarely teaches a child the skills necessary to act appropriately in the future (Tileston, 2004).

Part of the process of assisting a child in developing necessary skills is getting to the root of why they behave as they do. So, this all begs the question, why do some students misbehave? Below is a partial listing of possible reasons a student would misbehave (Kottler, 2008):

- They are probing boundaries
- They are mimicking the actions of others
- They have a strong curiosity or interest in something
- They desire attention
- They desire power
- They are bored or frustrated
- They have an emotional reaction to something that has happened outside of the classroom
- They feel their dignity is threatened
- They have difficulty handling disagreements
- They have an egocentric personality
- They lack self-control (they are impulsive)
- There are unclear directions or expectations
- They lack basic academic or cognitive skills
- They have a low tolerance for frustration
- There exists peer pressure or the need for group belonging
- Home or peer pressure reinforce the behavior
- There is an underlying emotional, physical, psychological, or learning disorder

And let’s not forget that sometimes it is just plain fun to misbehave a little. As you work with students who break rules and misbehave, consider spending time thinking about why they misbehave. After all, the reason *why* someone does something is every bit as important as *what* they are doing.