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## BATHROOM PROCEDURE

At the beginning of the day (or as soon as the first student needs to go), establish your bathroom procedure. If you are using the first student as a model, make sure you clue the whole class into what you are doing. Before you review your bathroom procedure make sure you have decided what your comfort level is with students' using the bathroom. Think about: How many students are allowed to go at a time? Is a student allowed to go while you are teaching or during group work? How many times a day are they allowed to go? Keep in mind that younger students will need to use the restroom more often than older students and when they need to go they should go right away. Trust them to be responsible for themselves. But also have several sets of spare underwear, sweatpants, and socks on hand for accidents, especially if you teach kindergarten or first grade. Second grade and third grade teachers may also want to have some extra clothes, just in case.

When teaching the bathroom procedure, also review the behavior expectations. For example, teach students that they are 1) expected to walk, not run, to the bathroom, 2) keep the bathroom clean, 3) wash their hands before they return, and 4) re-enter the classroom quietly, 5) put the bathroom pass back and/or sign back into class, and 5) walk quietly to their seat without interrupting the lesson.

Below are some tips on teaching bathroom procedures and a sample lesson plan.

### **Tips From the Trenches:**

- Have an area in the classroom where your bathroom passes live. For example, you may have 4 lanyards with a card on each that reads "Room 51 Bathroom Pass," so that students can wear the pass around their necks. Have a hook by the door where these are always hung, or a basket by the door where they are always kept, so students always know where to find them and can grab one as they leave the room.
- Have a book or clipboard by the door as well, where students can write their names before they grab a pass and leave the room. This is for safety as well as to teach responsibility. By keeping a log, in the event of an emergency you would know where students are. Having them sign back in is optional.
- Teach students a non-verbal hand signal they can use to ask you to go to the bathroom and teach them the non-verbal signals you will use to say yes or no. This prevents requests to use the bathroom from disrupting the learning for others.

## Sample Lesson Plan: Bathroom Procedure

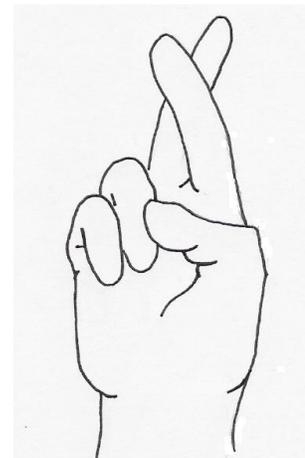
Teacher: Joan R.

Grade Level: Elementary

Procedure: Asking Permission to Use Restroom

### Lesson Plan

**A. Introduction** – I will begin the lesson by asking the students what we already know about raising our hands. Hopefully the kids will say that we raise our hand for permission to speak. Then I will tell the students that today we are going to learn another hand signal that is similar to raising our hand for permission to speak, but when they use this signal I will automatically know that they need to use the restroom. I will tell the students that they need to use this procedure any time that they have to use the restroom outside of our normal restroom breaks. I will then model the procedure, raising my hand while crossing my index and pointer fingers. I will ask the students to raise their hands in this way and ask them to tell me, chorally, what the signal means by asking, “Class, what does this hand signal mean?” They will chorally answer, “Can I go to the bathroom?”



**B. Practice-** I will then give the students an opportunity to practice. I will tell the students that it may not always be a good time to leave the room during a lesson, and that I will let them know whether they may go by either showing them a thumbs up signal (thumb held up) or a wait signal (flat hand held up). I will then have a volunteer ask to use the bathroom using the hand signal and I will give the wait signal. Then I will ask the class, “What signal did I give?” and have them chorally respond, “Wait.” Then I will ask, “What should this student now do? Turn and tell a partner.” After they discuss for 10 seconds, I will have volunteers answer. Hopefully they will say the student should put her hand down and continue working and then ask me again later.

I will then have a different volunteer ask to use the bathroom using the hand signal and I will give the thumbs up signal. Then I will ask the class, “What signal did I give?” and have them chorally respond, “Yes, you may go to the bathroom.” “So now I have given permission, but what is the procedure for using the bathroom? I will show you.” I will model how a student should get up, take a bathroom pass from the tray by the door, write their name on the bathroom log, and leave the room quietly. Then return quietly, place pass in the tray and return to desk without talking or distracting others. Then I will ask, “What did you see me do? Talk to a partner.” After they talk, I will take volunteers to answer and guide them towards saying the important things: 1) walked quietly to door, 2) took bathroom pass from tray, 3) wrote name in bathroom log, 4) returned quietly and put pass in tray, 5) went to desk without talking or disrupting. Then I will ask for a volunteer to show us how to do the procedure and I will have the class assess how well the volunteer did on each step.

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**C. Reinforce** – In groups I will give each table the following 6 steps and have them put them in order and make a quick pencil drawing to go with each step. The steps are: 1) Raise Hand with Crossed Fingers, 2) If you get wait signal, go back to work, 3) If you get thumbs up signal, walk quietly to door, 4) Sign your name on bathroom log, 5) Take a bathroom pass, 6) When you return, place pass in tray, 7) Return to seat without disturbing others. Every day for the first week of school I will reinforce the procedure by verbally noting students doing it well. I will also post a visual representation of this procedure on the wall by the bathroom pass tray.

**D. Consequences-** If after we have practiced the procedure over a period of time, a student chooses not to use the procedure, I will remind him by asking the class to show me what the procedure is for needing to use the restroom. Then if he continues to non-comply I will give him a verbal warning that he is not following directions and that the consequences for not following directions will be enforced. Those would be a written warning on his behavior card, then a hole punch on his behavior card and private conversation with me during free choice time about why he is not following the procedure correctly. A second hole punch will mean loss of free choice or recess time while the student writes out the procedure and then explains it to me and models it for me individually. After that, if there is more not-complying a note will be sent home about failure to follow directions.

**E. Incentives-** Incentives for not getting a hole-punch on their behavior cards includes tickets at the end of the week, which can be redeemed for small prizes. And a single week without any hole-punches also equals an invitation to a fun day at the end of every nine weeks.