ARE YOU A MEAN TEACHER?

A MEAN teacher insists that each student do the best s/he is capable of doing.

A MEAN teacher insists that students hand in their assignments on time and takes off points for late assignments.

A MEAN teacher does not accept incomplete assignments.

A MEAN teacher requires each student to think carefully and to make her/his own decisions.

A MEAN teacher holds each student responsible for her/his own behavior.

A MEAN teacher makes students keep the classroom, themselves, and their belongings neat and clean.

A MEAN teacher does not allow free time in class until all class-work is done.

A MEAN teacher gives homework regularly, sometimes even on weekends.

A MEAN teacher calls on students who don't raise their hands to answer questions.

A MEAN teacher requires all students to treat each other with respect.

A MEAN teacher makes life miserable for students by insisting that they always tell the truth.

A MEAN teacher produces students who are respectful, responsible, and successful.

THE WORLD NEEDS MORE MEAN* TEACHERS!

*(MEAN = Making Excellence A Necessity)
A Script for the First Day of School

Greet each student at the door:
- Hand each child a classroom rules sheet (goes in notebook)
- Put name cards and student information sheets on each desk
- Turn on overhead projector and place seating chart and 1st assignment on it
- Tell child to read and follow the instructions written on overhead
- Have instructions written on board for them to start on
- Finish greeting the last to arrive in class

Welcome students to class:
- Tell students my name
- Talk about family (husband, wife, kids, siblings), educational background, where I am from, where I live
- Tell them students why I want to teach
- Provide information sheet for students to fill out with name, contact information, parents/guardian, semester schedule

Determine Your Classroom Procedures:
- Decide what activities will be taking place during the semester.
- Make a list of the PROCEDURAL steps the students must follow to participate in these activities.

Explain rules and daily procedures:
- Refer to the rules that are posted at front
- Teach procedure for arriving in class
- Teach procedure for dismissal from class
- Explain discipline plan and refer to student handbook
- Go over procedures and review policy sheet
- Talk about Daily Assignments, location on front board
- Talk about how students will know about assignments they missed if are absent

Teach respect the classroom:
- Refer to classroom rules and procedures
- Teach them to be responsible; teach procedures

Explain the difference between Teacher's things and students' things:
- Some things are only for me
- Other things are for you to use as you need it

Explain thematic lessons, Portfolios/Notebooks, and such:
- Introduce syllabus and unit guides
- Each student will be assigned a folder
- Papers will be stored (filed) in the folder and placed in the container until end of the semester.

— If you do not plan, the students will plan for you. —
A "TO DO" List to Ensure a Smooth Start

A month before the term begins:
- Hit the back-to-school sales for supplies.
- Make sure you have a wardrobe that will reflect your professional status.
- Order any supplies that your district allows.
- Gather the other supplies that you may need.
- Pick up your curriculum guides.
- Pick up the school calendar for your school district.
- Pick up teachers' editions and supplementary materials.
- Begin reading and studying the course materials.
- Create your professional goals.

Three weeks before the term begins:
- Schedule events from the school calendar on your own planner.
- Join at least one professional organization.
- Create a course overview/pacing guide for the semester/year.
- Create semester plans.
- Decide on the resources you will need for each unit of study.

Two weeks before the term begins:
- Create a syllabus or planner for your students.
- Make sure the equipment in your room works well.
- Brainstorm a list of classroom management solutions.
- Create your class rules and procedures.
- Create a folder of materials for a substitute, in case you need one during the year.
- Set up your desk and files.

The last week before the term begins:
- Obtain the school forms that you will need.
- Ask any last minute questions.
- Master the material in your faculty handbook.
- Be prepared for emergency drills.
- Create a daily routine for attendance.
- Write a letter of introduction to parents/guardians.
- Photocopy anything your students will need as early as possible.
- Write out your first three weeks of daily lesson plans.
- Devise a workable system for textbook distribution.
- Study your class rosters so you can be familiar with names.
- Create a seating chart.

The day before school starts:
- Finish any last minute tasks.
- Make a final curriculum and room check.
- Exercise, eat well, and get enough rest.
Dear Parent/Guardian

IN A MILLION WORDS OR LESS . . . TELL ME ABOUT YOUR SCHOLAR!

Yes, you are getting a homework assignment! It takes me a great deal of time to know your child. Some I never really know. This activity gives you a chance to tell me what you think I should know about your scholar. I will read every one of them. I will not share your comments with any other person, including other teachers, unless you tell me in your message that I can.

Your scholar is in for a great experience this semester. The curriculum is rigorous, but very doable. I teach from a thematic approach and expect my students to read, write, think, work in groups, work independently, and be creative. Most importantly, I want students to make connections between what we read and study and real life — especially their lives. This should be a very exciting and busy semester.

Take your time with this, but there must be a deadline. Please send In a Million Words or Less . . . to me no later than _________. You can either send it with your scholar or email it to me. You can find my email address below. This will be an extra credit grade!

Communication is important! Please feel free to call on me, email me, or visit any time you have questions or concerns. My planning period is ____ from ____ to ____. Call the school to set up an appointment or you can read me at ____________________________.

I appreciate your time and effort.

Sincerely,

NAME
TITLE
EMAIL
Dear Parent or Guardian of ____________________:

The purpose of this communication is to inform you that I am presently experiencing some problems with ________________. I would greatly appreciate your cooperation in working with me in trying to take corrective measures to eliminate these problems.

The attitudes and habits listed below are important elements that have a significant affect on the success of a classroom. I have checked the areas that are making it difficult for your child to be successful and reach his/her potential in my class:

**AREAS OF CONCERN**

- Excessive talking
- Lack of effort
- Disrespectful to others
- Excessive tardies
- Not prepared for class
- Incomplete assignments
- Low grades
- Excessive detentions
- Disturbing others
- Inattentive
- Bad attitude
- Excessive absences
- Does not complete work on time
- Missing assignments
- Sleeps in class

At this time ________________ has an average of ______.

If you have any questions, please contact me at school. My planning period is ____.
If you would like a personal conference, please contact the counseling office for arrangements at XXX-XXXX. I appreciate your help in seeing that ________________ is successful in English II.

Sincerely,
STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Full Name: ___________________________ Date of birth: ______________________

Parent/guardian’s names: _____________________________________________

Mailing Address: (street or PO Box) _________________________________ (town) __________

Parent/guardian’s phone number: (home) ____________________________ (cell) __________

Parent/guardian’s E-mail address: ________________________________ Your E-mail address: __________

Your cell phone number: ___________________________ Do you have access to the Internet at home? ______

This Semester’s Schedule

1. ___________________________ Teacher ___________________________

2. ___________________________ Teacher ___________________________

3. ___________________________ Teacher ___________________________

4. ___________________________ Teacher ___________________________

• Do you have any health issues I should know about? ______ If so, what are they? ______________________

• List after school activities in which you participate (sports, band, work, etc.): __________________________

• Who lives with you at home? ________________________________________________

• What is your favorite band or who is your favorite singer/band? __________________________

• What are the top 5 songs you listen to ALL the time on your iPod or Stereo? ______________________

• One word that describes you as a person: __________________________ One word that describes school: __________

• What are your plans after high school? ________________________________

• What are your career plans? ____________________________ Why?

• What is your favorite TV show? __________________________________________

• What is your favorite movie? __________________________________________

• What is your favorite place to eat? _________________________________________

• What is your favorite candy or dessert? __________________________ Are you allergic to any food? ______

Please list food allergies:

• What was your favorite class last year? Why?

• If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Who would you take with you? Why?

• Above And Beyond: On the back, please write a paragraph about yourself. Tell me anything else that you want me to know about you. Please do your very best work.
Course ________________ Period ______

STUDENT INFORMATION

NAME ___________________________ Homeroom/Advisor ________________________

Mailing Address (street AND city) ____________________________________________

Student’s Email address ___________________________ Home / Cell Phone _____________

Parents’ Names ___________________________ Parents’ Email Address ________________

Name of guardian (if not living with parents): ______________________________________

Person to contact if there is an emergency/problem: 
  Relationship ___________________________ Telephone number ____________________

This Semester’s Schedule

1. ________________ Teacher ___________________________
2. ________________ Teacher ___________________________
3. ________________ Teacher ___________________________
4. ________________ Teacher ___________________________

Describe any unusual health conditions you may have: ________________________________

List after school activities in which you participate: (sports, band, work, etc.) 
___________________________________________________________________________

Complete the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I like to read ...</th>
<th>My favorite subject is ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The proudest I’ve been was ...</td>
<td>The luckiest I’ve been was</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The biggest mistake I’ve made was ...</td>
<td>What is a story from your own life or your ancestors’ lives that you are likely to pass along to younger generations?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What else should I know about you?
Triva Quiz

Here are a few questions which should "loosen up" even the more jaded high school student. If they're a competitive group, see scoring below.

1. On a standard traffic light, is the green on the top or bottom?
2. How many states are there? (don't laugh, some people don't know)
3. In which hand is the Statue of Liberty's torch?
4. What 6 colors are on the classic Campbell's soup label?
5. What 2 letters don't appear on the telephone dial? (no cheating!)
6. What 2 #s don't have letters by them?
7. When you walk does your left arm swing w/ your right or left leg?
8. How many matches are in a standard pack?
9. On our flag, is the top stripe red or white?
10. What is the lowest # on the FM dial?
11. Which way does water go down the drain, counter- or clockwise?
12. Which way does a "no smoking" sign's slash run?
13. How many channels on a VHF TV dial?
14. Which side of a women's blouse are the buttons on?
15. On a NY license plate, is New York on the top or bottom?
16. Which way do fans rotate?
17. Whose face is on a dime?
18. How many sides does a stop sign have?
19. Do books have even # pages on the right or left side?
20. How many lug nuts are on a standard car wheel?
21. How many sides are there on a standard pencil?
22. Sleepy, Happy, Sneezy, Grumpy, Dopey, Doc. Who's missing?
23. How many hot dog buns are in a standard package?
24. On which playing card is the cardmaker's trademark?
25. On which side of a venetian blind is the cord that adjusts the opening between the slats?
26. On the back of a dollar bill, what is in the center?
27. How many curves are in a standard paper clip?
28. What about the front side and back side? I think it also could be 10.

Answers

1. Bottom
2. 50
3. right
4. blue, red, white, yellow, black, and gold
5. Q, Z
6. 1, 0
7. left
8. 20
9. red
10. 88
11. Actually, it depends on the plumbing fixture. The notion that the water direction varies with the hemisphere you are in has been disproved!
12. towards bottom right
13. 12 (no #1)
14. right
15. top
16. clockwise as you look at it
17. Roosevelt
18. 8 What about the front side and back side? I think it also could be 10.
19. left
20. 5
21. 6
22. Bashful
23. 6
24. did you notice there wasn’t one?
25. Ace of spades
26. Left
27. ONE
28. *, #
29. 3
30. counterclockwise

Scoring

30-28 Mensa is calling, genius
25-27 Not too shabby
20-24 You could do better
16-19 McDonald’s is calling (would you like fries w/ that?)
15 or below...Wake up!
Tips for Teachers
Here's a list of questions that you should ask...
... before school starts!

- Where and how do I get supplies (paper, erasers, markers, tape, scissors, etc.)?
- How do I check out regular and supplemental textbooks? Who's in charge of that at my school?
- What do I do if I want to use a VCR? Overhead? LCD projector? Smart board? Other audio-visual equipment?
- How do I sign my class up for the library?
- How do I make arrangements for field trips? Who do I go to first?
- Is there a certain procedure for taking students to assemblies? How often do we have assemblies?
  - Should I keep my room locked?
  - What machines are available for me? (copier, laminator, etc.) Where are they? (Do they work!!!)
  - Will I get any money to buy supplies? How much?
  - If I decide to buy materials on my own, where should I go? Can I keep the receipts and be reimbursed?
- What procedures are in place for accounting for student attendance?
- What kind of records do I need to keep?
- Is my attendance record a legal document?
- What do I do with any money I collect?
- Does the school have grading guidelines?
- Is there a computer program available for keeping up with grades? What documents should I keep?
- Does the school send out midterms? Is there a form? A procedure?
- To whom do I report serious problems with a student's health? a student's behavior?
- Are there certain records that I need to maintain for students' permanent files?
- How will I know if I have students with disabilities in my classroom? Who will help me with them?
- Does the school have a policy about contacting parents? Keeping a phone log?
- Who should I include in parent conferences? Should I set them up or should I go through the guidance counselor? Can I hold them during my planning period?
- What should I do if there is a medical emergency in my room?
- How do I handle a fight between students?
- How do I report a disciplinary problem?
- What do I do if I need a substitute?
- How do I apply for personal, professional, vacation, or sick leave? Who do I go to at school for this?
- What is my salary? What deductions are taken out of it?
- Are there any "unwritten" rules at my school that I should know about?
- What is my personnel file, and what will be in it?
- Where do I go if I'm having trouble?
- Should I join a professional organization? Who do I contact to get more information?

These questions were adapted from a list originally created by the North Carolina Association of Educators (NCAE) and modified by Nancy Reid, Coach2Coach Teacher-in-Residence at UNCA, August, 2000.
THE ABCs FOR FIRST YEAR TEACHERS

- Admit your mistakes -- and learn from them.
- Be firm but flexible.
- Communicate with parents.
- Develop a homework policy -- and stick to it.
- Empower your students; don't just lecture to them.
- Find time to attend after-school events.
- Get to know all the teachers in your school and make friends with the cooks, custodians, aides, and secretaries.
- Have the courage to try something else if what you're doing isn't working.
- Institute a clear discipline policy -- and enforce it consistently.
- Just listen -- both to what the kids are saying and to what they're not saying.
- Keep a journal.
- Learn your school's policies and procedures.
- Model desired attitudes and behavior.
- Non carborundum ignorami. (Don't let the imbeciles wear you down.)
- Overplan.
- Prepare interesting lessons.
- Quit worrying and just do your best.
- Remember that you teach students first, then you teach whatever academic discipline you learned.
- Stay alert.
- Take pictures.
- Understand that the learning process involves everyone -- teachers, students, colleagues, and parents -- and get everyone involved.
- Volunteer to share projects and ideas, and don't be afraid to ask others to share their ideas with you.
- Work within your limits.
- Xpect the unexpected -- and plan for it! Yell if you need support.
- Zero in on your strengths, not your weaknesses. (Remember -- nobody's perfect!)

Finally, keep in mind the words of Philadelphia teacher Lew Clark: "Have a blast! You are about to begin a remarkable adventure."

From Education World website:  http://www.education-world.com/a_cum/curr152.shtml
Parent-Teacher Communication: The All-Important Conference

Before the conference:
- Do your homework. Have records, portfolios, assessments, and any other pertinent information available and organized so that you can readily share it with parents.
- If there are inconsistencies in records and/or information, try to clear these up before the conference so that you will be informed and better equipped to handle questions or make explanations for your own judgments.
- Allot an appropriate amount of time. If you anticipate the conference will require additional time, schedule that in, inform the parents, and don’t “overbook” yourself with other conferences.
- Remember to focus on the positives, as well as the areas that need improvement.
- Your goal is to forge an alliance with the parents. Behaving with sincerity, displaying knowledge of the individual student, and having a plan of action in mind will go a long way in getting the parent on your team.
- Consider asking your mentor, other grade level or team members, counselors, or a member of the administrative staff to be in attendance. However, the parents need to be informed if additional school personnel will be present.

During the conference:
- Remember to access information about the student from the parents themselves. Their insights can be valuable, but more importantly, you are demonstrating that you value their contributions.
- Balance the “air time.” While you have many important points to make, it is crucial that the parents have adequate time to speak about issues of their own concern and to ask questions. When parents have come to the conference with anger or frustration, allow them the time to “talk it out.” Many times being an active listener can alleviate the problem.
- Keep your cool. Remember that the student and his/her needs come first.
- If you take notes, inform the parents of your reasons for doing so.
- Remember to ask for parent suggestions (for the best times and ways to provide feedback, “insider” tips on the student, strategies the parent has discovered that work best, etc.)
- Bring closure to the conference. If other issues have arisen, schedule another time to meet for that discussion.

After the conference:
- Follow through on your agreements.
- Go back through your notes and reflect on your next course of action.
- Document the time, place, participants, and conversation of the conference for future reference.
- Make a commitment to yourself to continue to work on strengthening parent-school connections.
- If you share the teaching responsibilities for this student with other colleagues, inform them of any pertinent information you have learned.
Reflection

At the end of the first week of school, complete this reflection –

➢ Think back over this first week of school and complete this statement in as many ways as you can: "When I see ____________________ I think of _____________________."

➢ Describe the environment of your new classroom. What changes do you need to make?

➢ What kinds of skills do you wish your students had? What can you do to help them acquire these skills?

➢ List the primary events of your first school day. How did you react to them? Think about what you did well and what skills you need to develop.

➢ Finish the following statement: "When I think about my first days with my new students, I am thankful for ..."

➢ What would it have been like to have been a student in your class today?

➢ What kind of relationship do you want to have with your students?

➢ How do you want your students to feel about themselves as learners?