


THE EDIBLE
SCHOOLYARD
PROJECT



AGREEMENT SETTING
[TEACHER RESOURCE]



Summary: This document details some important ways to set up agreements in your class. Additionally, it provides suggested instructional practices that can support you in building an open, supportive, inclusive, and rigorous classroom community.

Teacher Notes:

- These [classroom mindsets](#) are meant to provide inspiration for students as they develop their class agreements. Think of them as an offering to the agreement process that can be used as inspiration. Share some or all of the classroom mindsets with students to prompt discussion about the sort of classroom space you want to create together. Draw connections with your students between their needs and the classroom mindsets.
- This resource was developed for The Edible Schoolyard Project's [Understanding Organic](#) curriculum and is part of the preparatory resources of the curriculum.



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Step 1: Discuss Student Needs

Give students time to reflect on what sorts of behavior and treatment they require from others to learn and grow in the classroom. Ask students a question like, “What do you need from us in order to thrive in the classroom?” or “Think about a time that you felt comfortable sharing and listening in a classroom. What made it possible for you to feel that way?” Give them the opportunity to share their answers. Consider using sticky notes or small group discussions to give each student the opportunity to share their needs.

Step 2: Name Common Themes

Invite students into the process of reflecting on and synthesizing their ideas. As a group, go through the needs students have presented. Note common themes, contradictions, and questions.

Step 3: Generate Agreements

Give students the opportunity to translate their needs into a concise list of agreements. Write on something that you can permanently display in the classroom, whether that be a piece of chart paper or a corner of the board. Discuss each agreement before adding, and make sure students consent to the addition of each agreement. When necessary and appropriate, suggest language or additional agreements.

Step 4: Revisit and Revise

The agreements can serve as a reminder of community needs and expectations throughout your time together. Students should feel ownership over the agreements and all members of the classroom can play a role in reinforcing and amending them when necessary. Agreements are ongoing and may be revisited and updated throughout your time together.



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Tips for Making Agreements

Address the What-Ifs before they happen. Get student input on various sticky scenarios that could come up in the classroom. Ask for their ideas on how they would like the class to address scenarios where students say or do something harmful to others. Solicit thoughts on what protocol they would like to follow when the agreements are not followed. Note their ideas somewhere where you can reference them and use their input if those scenarios come to pass.

Get everyone involved. It is important that all members of the classroom get a say in the shared expectations. Consider using small groups, sticky notes, or anonymous platforms to make sure that students can share in a way that feels safe for them.

Use positive statements when possible. Rather than saying “Don’t be disrespectful” or “Avoid talking over each other,” aim for positive aspirational actions, such as “Respect each other” or “Listen when others are talking.”

Focus on the collective. Operate from the assumption that you are a member of the community, not the boss. Your agreements are communal so that everyone can thrive in the classroom, so do your best to ensure that students’ needs are met by the agreements you come to.

Lesson Plan Outline

Steps	Instructional Practices Emphasized
Step 1: Discuss Student Needs Invite students to reflect on the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “What do you need from us in order to thrive in the classroom?”• “Think about a time that you felt comfortable sharing and listening in a classroom.• What made it possible for you to feel that way?”	Utilize a THINK, PAIR, SHARE strategy. Record what students share out on a piece of paper, or on sticky notes
Step 2: Name Common Themes <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As a large group, go through responses, pulling out common themes, contradictions, and questions.	Use an Open Discussion Format for the conversation.

Lesson Plan Outline Continued

Steps	Instructional Practices Emphasized
<p>Step 3: Generate Agreements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make a list of agreements. Invite students to pull out ideas that can become agreements. See page 4 of this document for suggested language around agreements. • Introduce any mindsets that you feel would add to the discussion and give students the chance to weigh in on whether they would like to add any relevant language to their agreements list. 	<p>This step can be facilitated as a group discussion, however it might be helpful to utilize a THINK, PAIR, then SHARE.</p>
<p>Step 4: Revisit and Revise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to students that the agreements document is a living document that can be added to and amended. 	<p>Remind students of their agreements when having open discussions. You may choose to have students reflect on the role the agreements played in the discussion afterwards as an independent quick write or a THINK, PAIR, then SHARE.</p>

Ongoing Practices:

- Consider setting aside time regularly for students to reflect on the class agreements. You don't need to wait for a conflict to arise in order to discuss agreements. For example, give students a few minutes of quiet reflection every few weeks to check in on how they have been relating to the agreements, and how they feel the community has been abiding by them. Are there agreements that have been harder to uphold over time? If there have been moments in which agreements were broken, what happened? How did it feel? Did the issue get resolved? If not, what still needs to happen for resolution to occur? Do students have any questions about the agreements, or new agreements they'd like to add? Creating structures that support a practice of engaging with community agreements as living, evolving dynamics helps students to practice mindsets that support deep reflection and growth. This step can be facilitated as an independent quick write activity every few weeks or months. You may choose to create time for discussion after students have reflected individually, or have students turn in their reflections like an "Exit Card".