a teacher’s guide to a

Successful Points Program

extend your management techniques with a points toolkit
“As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.”

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Introduction

A points system will establish the culture of your class.

In this workbook, you will gain the knowledge and tools necessary to establish an effective points system on the first day of school.

As a teacher it is important to combine strong classroom management tactics with systems that engage students in learning. A points system extends your No Nonsense Nurturing techniques, motivating students to practice behaviors that build the character and habits needed for lifelong learning.

Classroom management tactics help you steer your class. A points program gets your students excited about the destination.

But creating a points system from scratch can be overwhelming. There are a million ways to go, from stars on the board to paper “bucks,” to a centralized spreadsheet system.

But what if you didn’t have to reinvent the wheel?

In this workbook, we’ll provide the tools and knowledge you need to create a point system that works. All you need to bring is the fun. Your students are going to love your class this year!

The first day of school sets the tone for the entire year.

And that’s why you’ve planned ahead:

- ✔ Unit plans
- ✔ Lesson plans
- ✔ Home visits
- ✔ Seating chart
- ✔ Class procedures
- ✔ Points system

Why points?

A points system provides a backbone to your classroom management, reinforcing behavioral skills in a way that’s engaging and meaningful for your students.
3 Keys to a Successful Points System

✅ **Consistent**

Your points program should establish consistent patterns between student choices and outcomes. Your points system should include a mix of rewards and consequences, with an overall balance that is heavier on positivity and reinforcement.

- Explain *why* points are earned and lost
- Give feedback to students often and fairly
- Make the system part of your vocabulary and routines

✅ **Meaningful**

In life, students will learn that achieving ambitious goals requires learning new skills and behaviors. A points system helps you jumpstart their understanding of how to apply themselves to reach exciting goals, but only if the rewards and consequences are meaningful to students.

- Ensure rewards are age appropriate
- Be careful that your consequences don’t reward negative behavior

✅ **Sustainable**

An effective points system stops being effective the moment it burns you out. Period.

- It’s better to start small then layer in additional elements as you (and students) become fluent with the basics
- When introducing students to your points system, explain that your points system will evolve as they learn new skills
The Behavior Management Cycle

1. Create a Point System
2. Communicate to Students
3. Communicate with Parents
4. Reflect & Assess
5. Execute Consistently

Start the Guide
Your students want to know what to expect.

Student misbehavior is often due to unclear expectations, not bad intentions. Most students want to do the right thing, but they need to know the expectations and rules of your class first. To do this you need rules, a behavior rubric, consequences and incentives.

Classroom rules create categories in which students can operate

- Establish positive character traits that will lead your students toward success.
- Create rules that are inspiring, one word motos like respectful, relentless, grit, team player.

Reflection Questions
What kind of behavior characteristics will make your students strong learners? Grit? Curiosity? Relentlessness?

A behavior rubric is the foundation for your points program

- Establish specific behaviors that empower students as scholars
- Define the criteria for students earning and losing points for each behavior

Reflection Questions
What do you want to see your students doing, saying, believing?
A consequence ladder is an escalating sequence based on student demerits

- Practice verbal and non-verbal redirection strategies before escalating to negative points
- Plan consequences that are relevant, fair, and give students a positive step forward
- Ensure your consequences are actually undesirable

Example: if a student is attention seeking, a ‘consequence’ that brings attention is perceived as a reward, not a consequence.

Incentives are rewards or recognition students can earn with their points

- Capture student excitement with a mix of tangible and intrinsic motivators
- Create procedures for when and how students redeem incentives

Reflection Questions
What will happen the first time a student misbehaves?
How will you react in that situation?

Reflection Questions
What are your students excited about?
What type of budget do you have for incentives in your classroom?

Click to get printable resources in the toolkit
It’s time to share your expectations with students.

Introduce your points system as fun, fair, and focused.

Once you have designed your points system, it’s time to communicate your expectations, incentives, and yes, your consequences too!

Remember, students at any age will feed off of your energy. Share your excitement about recognizing and reinforcing positive student choices with points.

When introducing your consequence ladder, make sure your students know that your rules and consequences exist to ensure everyone in the class has the opportunity to learn and grow.

Clear Communication + Enthusiasm = Buy-in

Early in the year, every student should know:

- I can earn points by working hard and improving my skills
- I can choose to spend my points on cool incentives
- The behavior rubric is designed to help me grow academically
- My teacher gives us clear warnings when we’re off track
- I know what poor choices will lead to consequences

Click to get the lesson plan in the toolkit
How will you track your points?

Once students know the rules, the rubric, how they can earn points, lose points and redeem incentives, it’s time to start executing your point system consistently.

In this section, we will walk you through how to choose a system that works best for you: web based or paper based tracker.

We will also introduce you techniques you can use in your teaching practice and how you can pair those techniques with your point system.

First, select an approach that is right for you.

**Web-based App**
*Use your tablet, laptop, or smartboard*

- **Recommended if:**
  - You have internet at school
  - You have a laptop or tablet
  - You want to collaborate as a team

[Click here to download the FREE app!](#)

**Paper-based System**
*Use a pre-made paper system*

- **Recommended if:**
  - Inconsistent internet at school
  - No access to a laptop or tablet
  - You prefer a tangible tracker

[Click here for a paper system!](#)
Now it’s time to use your system!

Pair your No Nonsense techniques with points routines

✔️ Give Explicit Directions

Give clear, explicit directions based on students movement, verbal behavior, participation and time. Use the consistent language of your behavior rubric to promote student understanding and ownership of classroom expectations.

✔️ Narrate Student Behavior

After providing an explicit direction, narrate class progress to build momentum towards 100% without confronting specific students. If a student continues to ignore a direction, use nonverbal cues to provide individual corrections before escalating to verbal reminders.

✔️ Correct Off-task Behavior

Still not seeing compliance? It is time to correct the behavior. It is at your discretion to start with a verbal reminder and a single demerit, or escalate further for a repeating issue or major misbehavior. Most importantly, correct the behavior you don’t want to see. Immediately.

Up next

Track & narrate positive points
Managing your consequence ladder
Creating an awesome class store
Execute Consistently (continued)

Track & Narrate Positive Points

A simple recipe for reinforcing student choices:

1. **Say**
   Tell students exactly what they did

2. **Praise**
   A snap, chant, or just a big smile

3. **Move on!**
   Points are quick; back to the lesson!

Here’s what it sounds like to give a point:

(You don’t always have to say “that’s a point”)

“ I see that Jontae was generous enough to loan a pencil to his neighbor. Great **teamwork**.

“ That was our fastest transition yet this year. Everyone just earned a point for **managing time**.

“ Thank you Sarah for your **active participation** and leading us through the challenge problem.

→ Check out this video on how to track a point in the app!
The Consequence Ladder

Following through with consequences is the most important thing you can do. Here is how to get it done:

1. **Verbal warning**
   Give a warning the first time a student is breaking the behavior rubric. Track the warning.

2. **Phone call home**
   Track the warning. Use filters in the app to see who earned a phone call home at the end of the day. Make the calls.

3. **Break and reflection**
   Track the warning. Make a comment in the app to explain this third warning to parents and colleagues.

4. **Lunch detention**
   Track the warning. Use filters in the app to see who earned a lunch detention from you that day. Make sure the detention is served.

5. **Referral**
   Track the warning. Set up real time notifications in the app for the fifth warning so your admin knows immediately who is headed to the office.
Giving a Consequence

Let’s face it: dealing with misbehavior can be stressful. Consequence ladders help your students to learn that their choices matter. Equally as important, they give you procedures you can follow without spending a lot of mental energy in the middle of a lesson.

Use your points system to track and document where each student is on your consequence ladder:

1. **Be Upfront**
   - Explain to your students about how your ladder works
   - Model for students how to respond to feedback
   - Let students know that serious misbehavior can skip steps

2. **Be Reliable**
   - Use neutral, specific language when issuing a demerit
   - Use language from your behavior rubric when issuing

3. **Be ready**
   - If three demerits equals a lunch detention, hold the detention!
   - Have materials ready for reflections and apology letters
   - Have a separate plan for serious misbehavior
Create an Awesome Class Store

This is the fun part! Here are three things to consider:

Create Routines for Your Store

Incentives don’t have to be chaotic if you plan ahead!

**Example:** *Every other Friday, take the last 10 minutes of your lesson for students to spend their points at the class store. Call rows of students one by one while the rest of the class gets started on homework.*

Design Incentives That Foster Motivation

Incentives are never bribes. Here’s the difference:

- Incentives are about students; bribes are about adults.
- Incentives are earned over time; bribes are immediate.
- Incentives are logical; bribes are arbitrary.

Keep Your Store Fresh

Have standard items but also introduce “specials” like:

- Line Leader
- “Park It On the Carpet”
- Pizza Party
- Stinky Feet Pass (shoes off)
- Movie Day
- Teacher’s Assistant
It’s time to share your expectations with parents.

Introduce your system and get parent buy in at the beginning of the year.

Now that you have your students on board, it’s time to get your parents looped in. If you are using the web-based tool, the points you recorded all week are already configured into a weekly report for you!

Every Friday, you will communicate with parents about student behavior and academic performance to keep parents informed and excited about your class.

This creates a constant line of communication. Students know their parents will see their progress and parents come to expect weekly updates!

Clear Communication + Enthusiasm = Buy-in.

Early in the year, every parent should know:

- My childs teacher cares about my student academically and emotionally
- My childs teacher has high expectations for my student.
- My childs teacher expects me to review a weekly report every Friday.
- My childs teacher cares about my student outside the classroom and wants to include me in the academic process.

Click to get the parent letter + report in the toolkit
Stop. Breathe. What’s happening?
Its time to reflect on the effectiveness of your system and improve.

A point system is only good when it is effective. Take time to reflect on your relationship with your students and on their relationship to the system.

You can reflect with:

**Data**
- Set goals based on data you have accumulated through tracking positive and negative points.

  **This will look like:**
  I gave Sally 5 deduction in one day, I will have to plan on re-building that relationship and set goals with her around behavior.

**Observation**
- Reflect on your teaching with a reflection guide, being honest about what is working and where you can improve.

  **This will look like:**
  I have noticed that my students are coming unprepared for class, I am going to make a weekly incentive for student who are prepared.

Now, based on your reflections improve your system!
A ready-to-use, web-based app

Here’s how it works:

**Prep**
- Create account at whyliveschool.com

**Daily**
- Track points and warnings in the app
- Follow through on daily consequences

**Weekly**
- Download and print weekly reports

**Biweekly**
- Open your class store and record student purchases
Respectful
... to myself, others, and their property.
... in the classroom, hallway and cafeteria, by always following directions.

Excellent
... by encouraging and praising others.
... in the way I act.

Responsible
... with my attention, by staying seated and raising my hand.
... by being ready to learn, everyday.
# Behavior Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Earn points</th>
<th>Lose points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitude</strong></td>
<td>Accept challenges. Respond positively to reminders.</td>
<td>Responding negatively to reminders. Turning down challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Following Instructions</strong></td>
<td>Following directions the first time they’re given.</td>
<td>Ignoring directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respecting Others</strong></td>
<td>Chooses kind words and actions .</td>
<td>Chooses unkind words or actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Honest Effort</strong></td>
<td>Working hard and asks for help when needed and appropriate.</td>
<td>Dishonest behavior. Refuses to accept help when needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>Helping another student or lending classroom supplies.</td>
<td>Refusing to share or offer help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Active Participation</strong></td>
<td>Participates actively during class and encourages others.</td>
<td>Does not participate in class. Refuses to work with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homework Completion</strong></td>
<td>Homework complete and turned in on time.</td>
<td>Homework is incomplete or not turned in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staying on Task</strong></td>
<td>Manages time during class and independent work time.</td>
<td>Causes distraction during class, group work or independent work time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Coming Prepared</strong></td>
<td>Prepared with materials for class.</td>
<td>Unprepared for class.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Class Rewards

- **5 points** ► Buy a Pencil
  Need a pencil? Buy one from the class store!

- **10 points** ► Snack Bag
  Hungry? Buy chips or other snack!

- **15 points** ► Positive Phone Call
  Request a positive phone call home to share your great progress!

- **20 points** ► Line Leader
  Be the line leader and get everywhere first!

- **25 points** ► Lunch with teacher
  Private lunch with the teacher in the classroom!

- **50 points** ► Student of the Week
  Teacher Helper, best seat in the class, and All Bout Me Bulletin Board for the week!
Class Rewards

10 points ➤ Snack Bag
Hungry? Why wait? Buy chips or other snack from the class store.

15 points ➤ Positive Phone Call
Request a positive phone call home to share your progress!

20 points ➤ Computer Time
20 minutes of free computer or iPad time.

25 points ➤ Class DJ
Play three of your favorite songs during independent work.
Note: Must be class appropriate!

30 points ➤ Choose your Seat
Pick your seat for the week.

50 points ➤ Favorite Food Lunch
Have it your way. Enough said!
Non-verbal reminders
A look, tap, or signal reminding you to get back on track!

1. Verbal warning
   A specific verbal warning so you know what to correct.

2. Phone call home
   Your parent or guardian will be notified of your behavior.

3. Break and reflection
   Move to a different part of the room or the hallway and complete a reflection.

4. Lunch detention
   You will spend lunch in the classroom making up work or writing an apology letter as necessary.

5. Referral
   Sent out of class for disciplinary referral.
Lesson Plan

Objective:
Students will be able to act out examples of how they can receive a positive point or a negative point on the rubric.

Agenda:
1. Do Now
2. The Behavior Rubric
3. Brainstorm of + and – Actions
4. Skits
5. Homework
6. Practice Exit Procedure

Do Now

Stand at the door and greet students with explicit directions on how to enter the room and start the Do Now.

Please respond to these questions complete sentences.

1. What is your dream job?
2. When you do something awesome who should I call to brag about you?
3. What is that person’s number?
4. What are you most excited about for this school year?

Give students 5 minutes to finish the Do Now. Use a digital timer that will make a sound when students should put their pencils down. Make sure you are walking around the room during the Do Now. This is a great time to narrate student behavior and re-direct off-task behavior.

At the end of 5 minutes, have students share out what they wrote with their desk partners. Give a time limit and directions on how to work with a partner.

Transition to New Material by having a student read the objective for the day.

New Material

Key Points:

1. You will be earning points during class.
2. You will earn points based on a rubric that encourages behaviors that will make you a strong student.
3. You can use the points you earn to get fun rewards.

✓ Explain the three key points to your students by sharing the behavior rubric.
✓ Explain how you will give students points.
✓ Project the rubric and pick out a behavior to model for the class.
✓ Explain how students will know how many points they have.
✓ Explain how students will redeem rewards with their points.
Skits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Actions:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Walk around the room monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• You can give warnings and points now!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Call out time, “you have 1 minute left”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Offer help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make positive points public</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Break students into pairs before class starts
- Students have 2 minutes to plan and 1 minute to practice a skit acting out an action that would earn a + point or an action that would earn a - point.
- Have each group perform their skit and the class guess what behavior they were acting out.

Homework and Exit

- Pass out a letter to parents outlining the points system and have parents sign at the bottom.
- Take the last five minutes of class to explain how to exit the room and practice.

Tips

- Give directions that relate to movement, behavior, actions and time. ie “When I say go, you will start working with your partner, seated, using a level 2 voice for three minutes.”
- Start giving positive points as soon as you explain the behavior rubric. This will let students know you are serious and it will reinforce positive behavior.
- Acting out bad behavior is fun! Its okay if most students choose to act out the bad rather than the good, use the skits as teachable moments and discuss why that behavior will hurt the class culture.

Best Practices

- Narrate student behavior every 60 seconds
- Use Strong Voice
- Correct off task behavior immediately
- Smile
- Show, Don’t Tell
- Plan to Practice Procedures in the Lesson
- Greet students at the door, everyday.
Dear Parents,

I am writing to tell you about the behavior management system I am using this year. We’ll be using a points program in class to work on our behavior skills, reward students’ hard work, and provide you with more communication about how your child is doing!

In our class, we have behavior expectations that help ensure we are all learning. In our new program, students will earn points for meeting our classroom behavior expectations. Each week, you will receive a report that provides you with specific feedback. And as students earn points, they’ll be able to redeem special incentives in our class!

Here’s a diagram of how it works:

As part of our new points program, students will learn financial literacy skills like keeping track of their balance and when to save or spend their points. You will be able to see what rewards your students are buying and encourage them along the way!

As part of homework tonight, students will share this letter and sample weekly report with you. Please sign below!

Thank you,

I have read this letter and will look out for the first weekly report!

Please sign here: _______________________
Monday

Ms. Stubner  
9:12 am

+2 Helping Others  
+2 Making Places Better

Another student dropped her books while we were lining up to transition. Antonio helped her pick up her books. Thank you!
### Monday (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:10 am</td>
<td>Mr. Goodridge</td>
<td>+2 Creative thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+2 Outstanding Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:22 pm</td>
<td>Ms. Glenn</td>
<td>+2 Outstanding Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adrian asked a great question during our lesson about the Civil War</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Tuesday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:56 am</td>
<td>Ms. Stubner</td>
<td>-2 Disrespect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Called another student a negative name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:30 am</td>
<td>Mr. Goodridge</td>
<td>+1 Homework Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35 am</td>
<td>Mr. Goodridge</td>
<td>+1 Being Prepared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Wednesday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:46 pm</td>
<td>Ms. Stubner</td>
<td>+1 Homework Completion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:12 pm</td>
<td>Ms. Glenn</td>
<td>+1 Being Prepared</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Thursday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:45 am</td>
<td>Mr. Goodridge</td>
<td>-1 Homework Completion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Friday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8:58 am</td>
<td>Mr. Theobald</td>
<td>+1 On Task</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>+2 Outstanding Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:05 am</td>
<td>Ms. Glenn</td>
<td>+2 Outstanding Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Great presentation!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:20 pm</td>
<td>Ms. Stubner</td>
<td>+1 Creative Thinking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Congratulations!

You’ve covered the knowledge and techniques you’ll need to create an effective classroom points system from the first day of school.

Where can I get more?

Visit, follow, or like us for more about class management:

Webinars coming soon.

Want more help with behavior management? We’ll be hosting free webinars covering these topics during the 2014-15 school year. Email caitlin@liveschoolinc.com to sign up.