



How to Successfully Manage Students and Computers in the Classroom

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Walking into a classroom of students already at their computers is the closest thing to Armageddon most teachers will ever encounter. Along with the incredible powers computers provide to explore and create, they also come with the tremendous forces of distraction and chaos. There is much opportunity for mischief.

Thus, nobody should walk into the situation blindly. This guide is packed with strategies informed by experience as well as contributed by our users.

THIS GUIDE COVERS THE FOLLOWING TOPICS

- 1 Classroom Rules for Computers
- 2 Helping Students with Passwords
- 3 Keeping Students Focused at Their Computers

These will all help to nurture respect for technology, streamline the process of accessing online applications, and keep students focused and engaged in the classroom.

If readers wish to contribute more tips, we would love to hear them! Please post them with a picture on your social media and tag on Facebook [@Typingcom](#) or Twitter [@Typing_Com](#) on Twitter with the hashtags [#DigitalClassroom](#) and [#GreatClassTips](#).

1 CLASSROOM RULES FOR COMPUTERS

Whether in a computer lab or a classroom, it is important to teach students proper means of conduct when it comes to handling their computers.

Not only will this help maintain order in the classroom, it could also save the school a significant amount of money in lost or damaged technology.

The following are the **top 5 rules for students**.

It is recommended to go through each very clearly at the beginning of the school year and have a poster clearly displaying them in the classroom.

Clarity and consistency regarding consequences if rules are not followed is of utmost importance.



1. Handle Computers with Care

Classroom computers are a school investment and both, teachers and the school, need them to last. It's imperative to teach students how computers should be handled, how they shouldn't be handled, and what the consequences are for not treating computers with care.



2. No Food or Drink

The only thing worse than Cheetos grime on a keyboard is a soda spill (or really, any liquid!). Students should never have food or drink anywhere near computers. A food-free workspace will keep computers clean and safe.



3. Leave the Computer the Way You Found It

Using computers is a privilege. To earn that privilege, students must leave the computer and workspace in the same state it was in when they found it. If students are using a laptop cart, this means putting the laptop in its assigned spot and making sure it's plugged in.

"Dear Mrs. Smith"



4. Respect Others

Students should never type something that they wouldn't say out loud to someone. Whether it is through email, messages, or on a classroom message board, while communicating online, students need to maintain the same respectful tone they would use during verbal interactions.



5. Work Quietly

Whether it's working on typing skills or writing an outline, oftentimes computer work requires independent concentration. Students need to understand what volume they should be working at to ensure that everyone is able to work without distraction.

2 HELPING STUDENTS WITH PASSWORDS

One of the biggest setbacks for teachers across the board is getting all of their students logged in.

Without a good system, getting everyone set up can easily take up half the class and all of the teacher's attention. Thus, Typing.com offers Single Sign-on capabilities through Clever, ClassLink, or Google Classroom in order to enable students to login with their standard accounts.

If this is not an option for your school, here are some tips for clearly explaining to students the purpose of passwords, as well as helping them set and remember theirs. Further on, there are a few teacher-submitted strategies that may be useful.



Explaining the Importance of Passwords to Students

Before starting kids on a new computer program that requires them to choose a password, teachers should have a conversation with their students about the purpose of Internet passwords and why it is important to make them unique and not share them.

Even if the threat of someone accessing their account may not seem all that imminent or dangerous, students should take password creation seriously as early on as possible. This way, later on when they are creating passwords for an online bank account or health insurance provider, they will understand the importance of what they are doing.

Helping Students Create Their Passwords

With students, it is important that passwords strike a balance between being memorable, but not so simple that they can be guessed easily.

When it comes to younger students, a good place to start is to have students generate passwords that use a combination of a personal word, phrase, or abbreviation, and pair it with a number they will remember.

To keep this simple, a teacher could ask them all to make up a password with their favorite color and number (for example, **blue7**).



How to Help Students Remember Their Passwords

When starting out, it is strongly recommended for students to write down their password somewhere safe when they first create it. This way, they can check on it the first few times they log-on until they memorize it.

Soon enough, they will commit it to memory and, as long as they are using their login on a regular basis, they shouldn't have any password problems.

What to Do When Students Forget Their Passwords

On any application, even when teachers have the option of logging in and checking or resetting a student's password, this is not recommended.

Instead of giving them their passwords each time, a good idea is to have a "memory question" that can help students remember their passwords. This will help improve their memories and teach them responsibility.

If they have all created their passwords using the same formula (favorite color and number), this will be even easier.

What Typing.Com Teachers are Doing

“ I have a password card (actually a 4x6 index card) for each student in our school. I color-code them by grades, too. Each time a student creates a username and password, our procedure is to have them write the name of the program, followed by user name, followed by password. No exceptions. I keep all the cards in a recipe box that only I have access to. I issue cards as needed at the beginning of class and the students are responsible for their safe return.

The same card is used from kindergarten through grade 8. This does a few things: it reinforces the need to use different passwords for each site, and is tangible proof that writing down a password and keeping it in a safe location is a good idea. Both of these concepts are discussed at the beginning of each year, too.

- Nancy S.,
St. Michael the Archangel School

“ My students’ username is the first name.last name. For the password, they use their initials and their school student id number; the first name initial is capital. They use this password for all classes and programs, which helps them to remember, as well as the teachers. ”

- Sharolyn

“ I have the students use their school (login) and lunch code. This way they get continued practice on numbers they will need for their school career. ”

- M. Tor

“ We keep a three ring binder with usernames and passwords in the computer lab for those that misplace their personal sheet. ”

- Jo W.

Teaching your students the basics of creating and managing passwords early on, you will be doing them an invaluable service, which will help secure their online presence in the future.

We hope these tips will save teachers a significant amount of time and headache with each lesson!

3 KEEPING STUDENTS CONCENTRATED AT THEIR COMPUTERS

When a classroom full of students gets their hands on tech, whether it's laptops or tablet computers, this can either create productive harmony or chaos. It all depends on how it is managed.

So, how to keep students on task when they have the Internet at their fingertips? How can teachers ensure they use the tech appropriately and take proper care of it as they're learning computer skills?

From experience as well as some great feedback from users, we came up with this checklist to help teachers maintain order and focus in the classroom during computer activities.



Set Computer Rules Together

Before breaking out any new technology, teachers should have a class discussion about rules and best practices to follow. It should be reinforced to students that the computers are there to help with their learning, not distract from it. It also helps to create a poster with the rules and display it prominently.

A good place to start is with the 5 rules presented above; then, students should share if they can think of any other guidelines to add.

Set Up Classroom Seating for a Better View

Something to consider is a circle seating arrangement with the kids facing outward. This way, the teacher can stand in the middle and see every student's screen. If that's not practical, the teacher should regularly circle the room in order to keep an eye on each student's screen.

For those using our platform it is even easier because it provides a real-time student monitor enabling the teacher to keep tabs on student activity right from their teacher portal.

Eliminate Distractions

One example of the many possible distractions is something as simple as of the most a student clicking their mouse while the teacher is trying to give instructions. This can distract other students as well as the teacher.

To stop them from playing around while the teacher speaks, there could be a “mice up” rule when all students have to turn their computer mice over. Another option is to have them turn their monitors off as well to help eliminate visual distractions.

Use Triggers to Help Them Listen to Instructions

We heard from a teacher who had a tactic of using red cups. Each student had a red cup and, while the teacher was giving instructions, they were to put their cup behind them. Then, when it was time to work on their computers they would put the cup in front of them. This simple trigger did wonders for keeping students focused on the task at hand.

Consider Allowing Concentration Music

Concentration music is a fantastic way to help students focus on their computer tasks. It also helps to reduce talking and other noise as the students work.

Mrs. Matheny from Alma Intermediate school reports:

“ We like to listen to concentration music from YouTube and we use a 15 minute timer. I also use Symbaloo to embed the music from YouTube so students do not just have “access” to any song and do not have ads.”



Mrs. Wood, of Trending Tech in TN shares:

“ I play instrumental jazz via class speakers for [students] w/o earbuds & for [students] whose parents didn’t give consent.

Teach Kids to Troubleshoot

The teacher should explain what to do if students encounter certain problems, such as if their device runs out of battery power or if their headphones are not working. One option is to post a “troubleshooting tips” chart within easy view.

For younger students, the teacher should work through the solution with them. For older students, they can implement the “Ask 3 Before Me” procedure, encouraging them to independently find their own solutions.

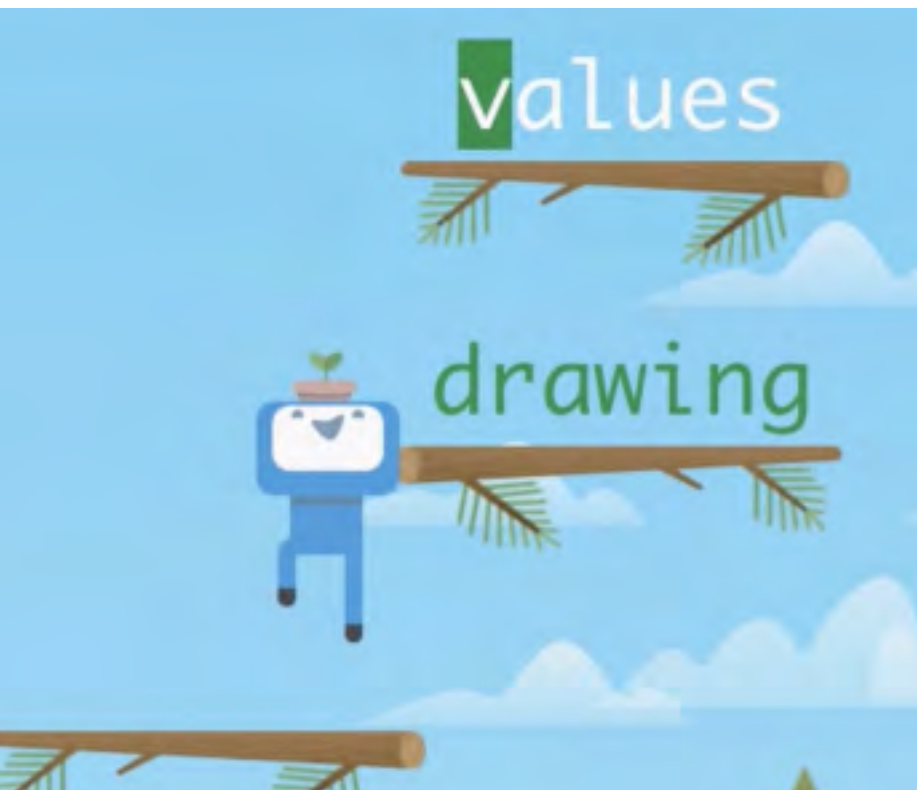


Set Daily Goals

Simply telling students “go work on this” isn’t sufficient. Students should have specific goals to accomplish. It is recommended that students write them down at the beginning of class. At the end of class, the teacher can check off what they actually completed and turn the form in.

Have a Procedure For When They're Done With an Assignment

When students are finished with an assignment, they should close the laptop lid or turn the tablet face down, just to provide a couple of examples. Having this type of procedure not only helps the teacher to quickly assess how many students are finished, it also keeps students from wandering around on the Internet. As students may work at very different paces, it is recommended to always have something for them to do when they finish early.



One great way to reward early finishers is to allow them to play a typing game, such as those included in [Typing.com](https://www.typing.com/). This enables them to have fun and be productive at the same time.

To help students target their typing accuracy, try Keyboard Jump, which they can access from our games section. And if typing speed is the goal, there's no better game out there than Nitro Type, where students type to race in real-time against other players to win cool cars, titles, and other prizes.

Reward Achievements

Teachers should consider posting a wall chart or keep a logbook where students can indicate when they've reached a goal or mastered specific computer skills. Other reward programs already in place for other activities can be used for computer work too. This will give students something to work toward and keep them more focused during the activities.



Teach Respect for Devices

Students should use the same device each time so they know they are responsible for it. Teachers should have a procedure for properly wrapping up and putting away accessories such as headphones and power cords. Students need to be taught proper handling and the impact a broken computer can have on the entire class.

Students Should Have Some Responsibility for Maintenance

Instead of teachers themselves handing out the computers, two students could do it. Rather than the teacher take on the chore of making sure everything's charged up, a tech monitor could be assigned that job. This frees up teachers for other things and gives kids a sense of ownership in the process.

Students and technology is a powerful learning combination, but it does come with challenges. By following these tips, teachers can make the most of tech in the classroom and keep the door to distraction closed.

LAST WORD

Computers are supposed to make life easier, aren't they? But when it comes to managing an entire classroom full of them, it doesn't really feel that way.

We hope this guide will help teachers find a way to manage a classroom full of students and computers with little or no trouble.

By implementing some of the strategies outlined, it should soon be easier to do this while also enabling clean computer labs and students that are focused on the task at hand.

For other useful tips and strategies, be sure to check out our social media.

 Facebook: [@TypingCom](#)

 Twitter: [@Typing_com](#)

Our blog also has a number of ideas to give students more variety. Our free program provides many digital literacy exercises geared towards building skills, plus we offer an expanded digital learning curriculum to make sure students acquire 21st century skills.

Learn more at:

www.typing.com