

BEHAVIOR · GRADES 1–6

Lunchtime & Break Expectations

What good unstructured time looks like

Why this matters

Most behavior incidents in primary schools happen during break and lunchtime — not in lessons. Yet most schools spend almost no time teaching children what good break and lunch behavior looks like. They're left to figure it out. This pack covers the routines and social expectations to teach explicitly in the first weeks of the year, and to revisit when things drift.

Going out

<p>Get ready calmly</p> <p>Coats on. Snacks collected. Walk to the line. No racing for the door.</p>	<p>Wait for the signal</p> <p>We don't go out until the supervising adult says. Even if the bell has gone.</p>
<p>Walk to the playground</p> <p>Inside school = walking. We start playing once we're outside.</p>	<p>Don't leave behind belongings</p> <p>Coats, snacks, water bottles back to class. The playground isn't where we leave things.</p>

On the playground

<p>Include others</p> <p>If you see someone alone, invite them. We don't have to be best friends with everyone, but we don't leave anyone out.</p>	<p>Play safely</p> <p>No play that ends in someone getting hurt. No piling on. No play-fighting. Use the equipment as it's meant to be used.</p>
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<p>Solve disagreements peacefully</p> <p>If you and a friend can't agree, walk away or ask an adult. We don't shout. We don't shove. We don't go quiet for days.</p>	<p>Tell an adult if something is wrong</p> <p>Telling isn't telling tales. If someone is hurt, scared, or doing something dangerous — tell. Adults need to know.</p>
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In the lunch hall

<p>Voice level: indoor</p> <p>We're not silent. But the whole hall doesn't need to hear. A normal conversational voice.</p>	<p>Stay seated until you're done</p> <p>Not up and down. Eat with your group. Get up only to clear up.</p>
<p>Eat what you brought</p> <p>Not swapping food across the table. Not picking from other people's lunches without asking.</p>	<p>Clear up your space</p> <p>Wipe crumbs. Stack your tray. Push your chair in. Leave the space ready for the next person.</p>

Common lunchtime issues and how to handle them

FALLING-OUTS. Two children quarrel at break. Don't try to investigate the whole story in 5 minutes. Calm both. Establish that they'll need to use the restorative conversation script later. Move on with the day. **EXCLUSION.** A child reports being left out. Investigate quietly with the group involved. Often, the story is more nuanced than 'they wouldn't let me play.' Sometimes there's been ongoing low-level cruelty. Take it seriously without taking sides immediately. **FOOD ISSUES.** Children pickering over food. Establish: you eat what you brought, you can offer to share but not demand, and food allergies make swapping potentially dangerous. **WET BREAK BEHAVIOR.** When break is indoors, behavior usually deteriorates because the space is too small for the energy. Plan structured indoor activities — board games, drawing, quiet zones. Don't expect 28 children in a classroom to play sensibly with no plan.

Working with lunchtime supervisors

Lunchtime supervisors often deal with the bulk of behavior issues, with the least support. A few things class teachers can do: • Make sure they have your class's pupil passports for SEND children • Tell them which children to watch (without breaking trust) • Back up their decisions in front of children • Listen properly when they raise concerns — they often see things in unstructured time that you don't see in lessons • Acknowledge their work. Thank them. They are usually massively underpaid and underappreciated.

