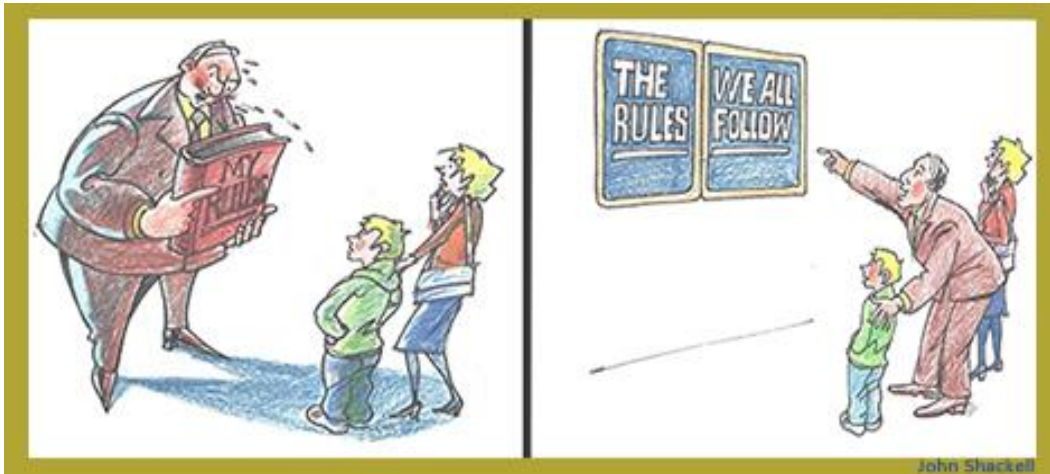


## What do we need rules for anyway?



To download this image, and find other resources go to

<https://www.narrative.org.uk/resources/my-rules-or-rules-we-all-follow>

## What do we need rules for anyway?

Class brainstorm which explores different kinds of rules and why we need them.

The image can be displayed throughout the session.

Objectives:

- to teach children the different categories of rules we have
- to understand why each category ('type') is necessary for harmony and well-being

This lesson activity is best done after the discussion activity included with this resource.

### Additional resources

*A copy of your school rules – the behaviour policy and any related documents*

### Preparation

Obtain a copy of your school rules. Make a separate list of three or four examples for each category of rule For the question and answer session. Bear in mind that not all rules are written in the policy, and aim to create a longer list rather than trying to select only the 'important' rules.

## What do we need rules for anyway?

### Background

There are several ways to categorise rules – this table provides a comprehensive framework which should be accessible to most children. From a child’s point of view there are eight categories of rule.

Relational or people rules	Prohibit behaviour which may cause harm to others and promote pro-social behaviour	‘No bullying’ ‘Listen quietly when others speak’
Schoolwork rules	Maintain an efficient and effective work environment	‘Raise your hand if you want to speak’ ‘Come prepared for lessons’
Free-time rules	Govern children’s conduct around the school outside of class	‘No football in the small playground’.
Changeover rules	Apply when children are moving around the school eg between lessons	‘Arrive by the second bell’ ‘Walk on the left side of the corridor’
Environment rules	Are required to maintain a safe and ambient school environment	‘Don’t litter’ ‘Leave your desk tidy’.
Safety and health rules.	Prevent harm to the child or others	‘Don’t run in corridors’ ‘Now wash your hands’
Personal rules	Taking responsibility for what one says and does, thinking before one acts and doing one’s best.	‘Tell the truth’ ‘Stand by what you have said’
Etiquette rules	Acceptable behaviour in social situations,	‘Don’t swear’ ‘Don’t pick your nose in public’.

## What do we need rules for anyway?

### Introduction

*'When we looked at this picture before, we decided that the rules did not belong to anyone, but were rules we all follow for everyone's benefit. Today we are going to look more loosely at different rules to see why they are for everyone's benefit.'*

### Activity plan

There are two options. One needs a lively and quick-witted group who are good at generating lists. The other is more reliable in getting a good spread of rules.

#### *Option 1*

As a whole group brainstorm for as many rules as possible. Give prompts. Aim for a broad list with 2/3 examples for each type – so 30 rules would be good, more would be better. Include rules that are minor or unwritten.

Ask the children to group the rules if they seem to be the same sort of rule. This can be done in smaller groups, individually, or as a whole group depending on your teaching style and practice.

You could prepare an example of several rules which all fit one category to show what you mean by 'the same sort of rule'. The objective is to help the children to identify the categories for themselves.

Look at the different rule groupings the children make and map them to the eight categories.

#### *Option 2*

Display the eight categories to the children using your examples to explain each one.

Now ask the children to think of as many rules as they can – as each one is given, ask them to tell you which category it should be placed in.

### Question and answer

Select a set of 10 rules from your list of rules prepared in advance choosing ones which have not been discussed or explained in detail. There should be one from each category plus two duplicates.

Read each one out, and ask students to write down first whether they think the rule is fair, then why the rule is needed and what category it fits. You may want to provide an answer sheet with a 3-column table.

### Discussion

Taking each question in turn start with a 'fairness poll' (hands up). Note the fairness score on the board.

Starting with the three highest scoring rules, ask children what category the rule belonged to, and what its purpose is. Then ask pupils to say how rules fitting that category benefit them as

## What do we need rules for anyway?

individuals. Ask the class if anyone does not think they benefit from the rule. Then turn to the three rules scoring lowest and repeat the process. The likelihood is that the ones that seem least fair are also the ones that are least understood.

If so, it's worth pointing out that when we understand why the rule is there it usually seems fair.

### Summary

Taking each category in turn, summarise why we have rules for that category. Each Statement should be of the form

*We all benefit by keeping the [this category] rules because it means [social benefit].*

eg We all benefit by keeping the Safety and health rules because they stop us from hurting ourselves or other people.

Depending on the time available, involve children in deriving these statements or provide them in advance.

- Categories overlap – so some rules may belong to more than one category.
- Expect children to raise issues which get to the heart of the human condition!

Many political and ethical questions arise when we think about the function of rules, and the role of schools, in forming 'good citizens'. For some commentators, a 'good' citizen, is in reality just a conforming one. They point to the power imbalance between the rule-makers and the rule-takers.

This activity is based on the opposite belief, that individuals will flourish more and achieve more of their potential in a society which works safely, effectively and harmoniously.

### Guidance note

Children may say things like 'Mr. Noname is like the teacher on the left'. This could appear problematical, but actually if the children have noticed that then there is every likelihood that Mr. Noname's reputation already goes before him. This is hardly a 'disclosure'\*

Deal with it by saying '*This activity is about rules, not teachers, and we aren't going to discuss individual teachers*'.

\* Needless to say any genuine safeguarding disclosures should be shared with the DSO after the class.

Please send feedback by using the comments option at

<https://www.narrative.org.uk/resources/my-rules-or-rules-we-all-follow>