

PART ONE

Students and Student-Teacher Relations

Self-Opinionated Young People

Sometimes there are students who refuse to carry out responsibilities given them, who are stubborn to the point that all threats and punishments seem to have no effect on them, and who lay open resistance to a teacher's authority. There are others who eventually give in but with such bad grace that they murmur aloud and make noises which disturb their fellow students' attention. Sometimes, those who give in to the teacher assume a posture that is a kind of defiance of the teacher by putting their heads down on their desks, by making ridiculous faces, or by imitating the gestures of the teacher when the teacher isn't watching.

Teachers should first avoid as much as possible giving occasion for such scenes, which can harm the good order of the class and undermine the authority of the teacher. If a teacher has not been able to foresee and prevent this situation, the teacher should refrain from responding too severely until

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convinced of the seriousness of a student's behavior and the punishment deserved. When a teacher finds it necessary to punish a student in this situation, the teacher should wait until the student's excited state is calmed down and he or she can be talked to without arousing a greater state of disrespect. The teacher has everything to gain by playing for time, since pushing the student to the

limit will gain the teacher nothing. When the teacher notices that the young person is calmer, the teacher should use that moment to speak with the student, bringing the student, in an offhand way, to admit to both the original problem and the resistance to the teacher's authority. A teacher will in this way help the student understand that a punishment is necessary only to repair the poor example he or she has given to other students.

Be sure to carry out the punishment while displaying great concern for the student, even if you ask the student to apologize publicly for the behavior. If the student persists in his disobedience, the student should be referred to other school authorities so that they can consider ways of helping the young person. A teacher should always take the opportunity to speak with the student's parents about the situation so that the teacher's authority is not compromised. Dismissal from school, however, should be used only as a last resort, after all other means of working with the student have been tried.

Teachers and schools should proceed in the same way when dealing with students for whom penalties seem to be counterproductive.

