



Join Buddy, Above the Line

Dear Parents,

Imagine being a student in a school where:

- All the adults (teachers, supervisors, bus drivers, administrators, parents, after-school staff) work hard to develop relationships.
- Behavioral expectations are consistent and taught in a way that makes sense to kids.
- Misbehaviors are viewed as teachable moments and responses help build responsibility.

This year at Sarah Adams, we are implementing a student management system called "Above the Line". It is important for the whole school to use the same terminology when it comes to discipline so that as the kids move up in grades, they know what to expect no matter who their teacher or supervisor is. Having a consistent system also enables those on recess and lunchroom duty, specials teachers, substitutes, and parent volunteers to feel more in control of the students they may not know. The key component in Above the Line is that kids take responsibility for the choices they make. Research shows that kids make lasting behavioral changes when they are held accountable for their actions and when they are required to think of ways to fix their mistakes.

Here's how it works. First, a classroom teacher's behavior management plan will stay the same (stoplight colors, tokens, tickets, etc.). However, when a child exhibits a behavior that is unacceptable he/she will say, "That was below the line." Each classroom will have a poster or bulletin board that serves as a visual reminder to help kids understand that they need to fix their actions if they become Below the Line. If the child turns his/her behavior around after this warning, they return Above the Line. Unfortunately, if a student remains below the line for the day, he/she needs to complete a "Fix-it-Plan". The student completes the form and then a parent signs it that night and it is returned to the teacher the very next day. Stopping to think about one's behavior and developing a plan to fix the mistake, brings about lasting change rather than just saying "I'm sorry." The 6 Pillars of Character: Caring, Fairness, Trustworthiness, Responsibility, Citizenship, and Respect must always be connected to students' behavior. Whenever a student is not displaying a given trait, he/she should be placed below the line.

Also, this common language will improve behavior in the lunchroom and on the playground. When a supervisor is outside and sees a child misbehaving, all he/she needs to say is, "That behavior is below the line." This common phrase will trigger that child to redirect his/her action. If a behavior continues, the supervisor will communicate with the child's classroom teacher. The supervisor does not implement a Fix-it-Plan; only teachers conduct this step in the process.

When a serious behavior occurs such as violence or a pattern has begun, that is considered Bottom-Line behavior, then the child should be sent to the assistant principal or principal.

Character Bones will definitely be awarded to those students who are soaring above the line in their personal responsibilities and actions towards others.

Above the Line Steps

1. Verbal Warning "That was below the line."
2. Place the child's name visually "below the line".
3. Student improves behavior independently and his/her name returns to above the line.
4. If the behavior persists until the end of the day, child completes a Fix-it-Plan before leaving school and returns it signed the next day.
5. If a child's unacceptable behavior becomes a pattern and his/her Fix-it-Plan is not effective, the student will be sent to the assistant principal or principal's office for further consequences.

Note: Each student will begin each day Above the Line!

Thank you so much for supporting Sarah Adams with this new student management initiative!

Sincerely,

Claudia Mall
Principal

Julie Riddick
Assistant Principal