

TEACHERS: HOW CAN YOU SUPPORT AN ETHICS CLASS?

Thank you for being a supportive presence during an ethics class.

Ethics lessons are delivered by trained and impartial volunteers who follow scripts reviewed and approved by the Department of Education. The class forms a community of inquiry with the teacher seated within the circle of students. The lessons are a chance for students to engage in meaningful discussions of age-appropriate real-life ethical issues, such as fairness, friendship, honesty and the ethical treatment of animals. Ethics teachers present stories and questions that encourage students to critically explore ethical dilemmas through discussion with their peers.

How can you help in an ethics lesson?

Our teachers are trained to facilitate discussions and manage student behaviour by implementing clear rules and guidelines to help the class have respectful discussions.

Allow our teachers to manage the class. We've found that your presence alone helps with student behaviour and there's no need for you to get actively involved unless requested. Stepping in too early can undermine their teacher persona, which sometimes takes a little time to establish.

- If you'll be in the room during the lesson: Please position yourself away from the circle, allowing our teacher to call on you if needed. We also ask that you don't provide input into any discussions (as fascinating as they may be!). Ideas should only come from students to avoid unintentionally biasing them.
- If you'll be roaming or in another room during the lesson: Let our teacher know where you'll be or where to get help in case there's a safety issue or the management of a student's behaviour needs escalating.

Allow them to set up a circle. Our lessons are discussion-based and work best when students are in a circle, making eye contact and engaging directly with each other. We may need to move furniture to create a circle in which students aren't bunched up. Your advice on how to best do this is welcome. Our teacher will ensure the room is returned to normal for the next class.

Expect some noise and some silence. Pair discussions are common in ethics lessons and can be a little noisy. Our teachers have been trained to monitor noise levels and ensure students are still respectful, on task and using their inside voices.

Silence is common too! We ask some pretty big questions and our teachers are trained to allow lots of thinking time and not push students to answer (it's even okay for questions to remain unanswered).

Be mindful of causing distractions. We understand the need for you to make this time productive and that schools can be noisy places. You can help the class get the most from their lessons by taking care not to allow distractions (such as teachers taking calls or having meetings in the same room).

Feedback is welcome. You know your students best and our teacher will welcome any tips you have for managing the class or specific students. You're welcome to work with our teacher before or after lessons to develop a plan, such as seating certain students away from each other or allowing the use of fidget toys.

If you have any questions or would like to learn more about ethics lessons, please contact our helpdesk at helpdesk@primaryethics.com.au, visit our website www.primaryethics.com.au or phone 02 8068 7752.