



PIONEERS

Tips & tricks for working with young people

Be fun:

This isn't school. We all want to have a good time. Make jokes and be positive as much as feels natural when you deal with kids.

Be fair:

Admit it if don't know an answer or have made a mistake, apologise if you are wrong. You will earn way more respect by being human than you would by trying to uphold an image of unassailability.

Be firm:

Sometimes you will have to pull a frowny face. Make it quick and impersonal, then forget about it. Make sure you mention that it isn't the kid who is bad, but the behaviour which is unacceptable.

Provide a safe space:



- **Don't point at kids.** Pointing is an inherently aggressive and overbearing action, and it will freak kids out.
- Make eye contact, **try to learn the kids' names** and use them. If you can't remember a name, try something like 'buddy', 'mate', or 'dude' – whatever feels natural.
- Avoid 'yes' or 'no' questions where you can – **open questions are the way forward.** Start your questions with 'what/how/why'. Also try 'describe/explain/can you tell me...?'
- **Guessing the answer is fine!** Some of the kids might be less forthcoming or confident than others. Asking someone to 'take a crack at it' or 'have a go' is a good way to encourage answers – it's an approach that works with a variety of people.



Give Support:

- **Get kids to ask the people next to them for help first.** This benefits all the kids involved, and frees up your time so you can support the ones who are really stuck, or supervise tough/dangerous jobs.
- If a kid asks for help, **only touch their keyboard if they are way behind** everyone else and need to catch up. Otherwise, point out the error and let them fix it.
- 'It isn't working!' should always be responded to with 'Why not? Have you read the error log?' **RTFM (Read The Flaming Manual) is a real thing**, and an important skill for digital life.
- **Get down on their level when you talk to them** — sit in a chair, crouch, or kneel. There is a very real physical component to 'talking down to someone'.

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Deal with disruptive behaviour

- **Don't let kids talk over you, another instructor, or another team member.** That's disrespectful. If you are talking to the group and you see this happening, just stop and wait, or explain you're waiting for everyone to listen.
- **If you see a kid getting frustrated by a task, jump in and calm them down** by talking them through or helping them past whatever is holding them up. You could also recommend they take a break and get some air/wash their face/grab a drink.
- **Be casual** when you discipline kids publicly: make a joke, or mention that bratty behaviour is for brats.



Raspberry Pi

#MakeYourIdeas

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