SPOTLIGHT

Routines are vital for creating a focused, respectful learning environment. They reduce cognitive load, increase time on task, and help students internalise expected behaviours, leading to greater independence and better engagement. When routines are clear, practiced and consistently reinforced, they free up students' working memory so more energy can go into learning, not figuring out what to do next.

''The better our routines, the more likely it is that positive behaviour becomes automatic." – Jamie Clark

The 3 Types of Classroom Routines (Doug Lemov, 2021)		
Academic	**Procedural**	**Cultural**
Support learning behaviours e.g. *Think–Pair–Share, Choral Response*	Streamline class transitions e.g. *Do Now, Mini-whiteboards*	Build belonging and shared norms e.g. *Active Listening, Positive Feedback*

Trusted Techniques

- **Practise the Process:**
  - Break routines into individual steps and explicitly teach each one (e.g. mini-whiteboard routine: 1. Eyes on me → 2. Pose question → 3. Think time → 4. Write answer → 5. Show me).

- **Foster Belonging:**
  - Start each lesson with a personal greeting and reminder of behavioural norms: "Morning, Amina. Sit down quietly and begin your Do Now. Thank you." This sets tone, builds rapport, and reinforces consistency.

- **Praise with Precision:**
  - Acknowledge when expectations are met: You all listened to me brilliantly. That is real focus. Thank you." Use specific praise that reinforces the desired behaviour.

- **Entry Routines Matter:**
  - Welcome students warmly at the door and give immediate direction: "Books open on p34 and title underlined. Let's go."

- **Gain Attention:**
  - Use consistent cues (e.g. "1, 2, 3 – eyes on me") and wait for full attention. Practise until automatic.

- **Tight Transitions:**
  - Make transitions slick and predictable with visual timers or clear instructions: "You've got 60 seconds to get out your books. Go."

- **Defuse Debates:**
  - Avoid back-and-forth with challenging behaviour. Use calm redirection, e.g. "You can either do X or Y. I'll come back in 30 seconds."

Reflection Questions

- Are my classroom routines clear, consistent, and practiced enough?
- Do I narrate and praise behaviour that aligns with expectations?
- How do I build a sense of safety and belonging from the moment pupils walk in?