

GUIDE FOR HANDLING COMMON PROBLEMS

Troublemakers

1. One of the simplest ways of handling disruptive students is to involve them. For example, ask them to carry something, read a label, answer a question, or select an object of art to discuss.
2. When the students are restless or distracted move more quickly from object to object. It is ok to look at more objects in less depth if attention span is an issue.
3. Using student names is useful for drawing distracted, disinterested, or unruly students into the group.
4. When the entire group becomes too wild, have them sit on the floor as they look at objects or take them into the family resource center and have them sit at the tables and draw their impression of works they have seen in the museum.
5. Enlist the aid of parent chaperones, teachers or guards when needed. Parent chaperones can wait with the student at the back entrance or take the student to the teacher for necessary guidance. The guards can let the student know they must conduct themselves properly and follow all rules while visiting the museum (give them a stern reminder). The teacher can remove the student from the group or stand with the student to achieve the desired behavior.
6. On the rare occasion when a group becomes so unruly they are disrupting other visitors or possibly endangering objects, cut the tour short and take them to the back entrance to sit until their classmates have completed their tours.

Talkative Teachers or Parent Chaperones

1. Acknowledge them and tell them you are pleased they are visiting the museum, because if they feel recognized they are less likely to make their presence known during the tour.
2. To prevent an adult from dominating the group discussion, start a question with the statement "This question is for the students," or you may want to direct your question to an individual: "Susan, tell me what you think about..."
3. If teachers are determined to participate, consider ways to integrate their responses in your tour. For example, test whether people of different ages perceive the same things in an object. First check student responses, then have the teacher indicate what he/she saw.
4. When all else fails, talk quietly with the teacher as you are moving from one area to another, stressing how important it is for the students to participate and formulate their own opinions about the art.

“We want to see everything”

1. Let students know the plan in advance so they won't be disappointed. For example, compare the museum to a library with lots of books, and you can't possibly read them all... Tell them that they will only be able to see a few of the works of art in the museum and that you hope they will bring their families at another time to see the whole museum.
2. Select objects in different galleries and floors so they feel as if they have seen a good portion of the museum.
3. Start with a “blitz” walking through several galleries without stopping to talk. Briefly discuss what they noticed and responded to when you reach the first object. If there is something that everyone really wanted to see, promise to take them there at the end.

“We have seen this before”

1. If the group has already toured a specific section, you can either switch to an alternate route or ask them to recount what they remembered about the objects.
2. Ask the students to scan the room and determine if there are any new objects that were not there at their last visit, or anything they would love to spend time viewing again.
3. Explain that it is fun to see an object more than once; perhaps they will see something that they did not notice in a previous visit.