

TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION GUIDELINES FOR THE POLITE SOCIETY

The Polite Society was started in 1986 by the Rev. Ian Gregory, a Congregational minister at Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire. He and several men at his church were concerned about the deterioration in considerate behavior among people at every level of society. They were distressed to hear people say that England was not the nation that they once knew.

They put together a simple code of courtesy which they undertook to try and maintain as the basis of their everyday behavior. The idea became known locally, and eventually letters were arriving from all parts of England. The Society drew up a constitution and became a registered charity in 1988. It holds a national day of courtesy, normally on the first Friday in October. The Society holds an annual meeting of members in May. It is managed by a council drawn from its membership and representing a wide range of business interests and ages.

Schools are registered with their own code of courtesy, drawn up from suggestions by more than 100 children in 1987. The Society is frequently asked for its views on current issues and matters of debate. It's primary concern is to promote the importance of considerate behavior, and affirms that people and organizations committed to good manners will be more successful in every way.

"We are not here to be an arbiter of morals, or to pass easy judgment on anybody or anything. We simply wish to encourage those who value good manners by showing that many others share their views. We are also concerned to assess what good manners might mean, and how they might be encouraged, at this time in the life of the nation and the world."

The Polite Society can be what you make it. You can adapt the rules to fit the needs of your school. You do not have to be affiliated with the mother society in England if you do not want to. If you choose to become affiliated, the cost is \$35.00 for a membership for your school. Send the money with your name, the school's name and address to:

**The Polite Society
6 Norman Avenue,
Henry on Thames
Oxfordshire, RG91SG, United Kingdom**

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Dr. Gregory will send you a membership certificate with some additional information about the society. You will also receive a newsletter. There is no cost for the students to join--they just have to commit to being polite and sign the application form. The teacher can make cards that fit into a wallet stating that he/she is a member of the (school) Polite Society. The card is used in connection with the restaurant experience. The students cannot participate in the restaurant experience unless they are members of the society. A large poster displaying the rules of the society can also be placed in the room and referred to frequently.

I hold a weekly drawing for all members and the winner receives a prize. This gives the student an incentive to join. You could also have pizza parties, etc. for members. One school wanted to impress upon the students the importance of etiquette during lunch. A contest was held (which could be sponsored by the Polite Society) between the various tables at lunch. They were responsible for table cloths, plates, center-pieces, etc. placed on their table. Judges were used consisting of students, counselors, teachers, etc. They chose the table that was the most attractive and used the best manners. The winning table received a prize (could be a free Coke, lunch, etc.)

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| <p>Official Polite Society Membership Card</p> <p>The bearer of this card is an official member of the _____ Polite Society and will be courteous to those with whom he/she has personal dealings. The member also agrees to uphold and abide by the Courteous Code of Conduct.</p> <p>----- Member's Name ----- Date</p> |
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Sample Membership Card

Polite Society Code of Courteous Conduct

So far as it is within my power, I will, at all times, be courteous to those with whom I have personal dealings. As a member of the Polite Society, I will uphold and abide by the following conduct:

- * I will exercise self-control in all situations likely to test my patience and temper.
- * I will treat others with kindness and courtesy.
- * I will consider other people's feelings.
- * I will refrain from using language that is obscene or abusive.
- * I will participate in extracurricular activities that will advance my own personal growth free from obscene subjects.
- * I will take pride in my school by not littering, vandalizing, or destroying school property.
- * I will show respect for my administrators and teachers.
- * I will use proper etiquette when eating.
- * I will be honest.
- * I will respect the personal property of others and ask before I borrow things.

I hereby agree to the following terms as stated above which will allow me to become a member of the Polite Society.

Signed:

Name

Date