

## **E-Mail Correspondence Using Customer Care**

**New Teacher 1: Mr. Energy**

**Support Staff 1: Ms. Flap**

**Seasoned Teacher: Mr. Goodin Tensions**

**Support Staff 2: Ms. Polished**

**Parent: Mr. Fair**

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***Setting the Scene:** In the beginning, it all started so simply... Mr. Energy had some family medical issues which he had to address. He prepared diligently for the substitutes.*

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**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** "Thank you for calling Exceptional High School. How may I direct your call?"

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** "This is Mr. Fair. Is Mr. Energy available?"

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** "Oh I'm sorry. He is out. He had some family medical issues to deal with."

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** "Oh, I see. It must be serious. He seems to be out frequently."

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** "I don't know how serious, but he has missed at least once a week for the last five weeks."

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** "So do you expect him back anytime soon?"

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** "I don't know when he will be back. Do you want to leave a message?"

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** "No message. Thanks"

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** "Thank you for calling. Have a nice day."

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***Setting the Scene:** Mr. Energy was absent again, but he had prepared for a substitute. A majority of the students displayed unruly behavior and the substitute was frustrated. She left a note for the teacher of her dissatisfaction and a very short list of well behaved students. Mr. Energy returned to school to find this note and was very displeased. He decided to discipline the whole class. Later in the day, he had lunch with his team and complained about how his students misbehaved while he was out. Everyone at the table shook their head. They have been there at least once. The support staff members sitting there listened.*

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**Seasoned Teacher (Mr. Goodin Tensions):** "Hey there. How is it going Mr. E.?"

**New Teacher 1 (Mr. Energy):** "It's been a long morning. **[Frazzled]** I am just trying to get my class back under control."



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**Seasoned Teacher (Mr. Goodin Tensions):** “Well, what seems to be the problem?”

**New Teacher 1 (Mr. Energy):** “I was out Friday and they were terrible for the sub. They were talking loudly, disrespecting the teacher, throwing spit balls, etc. You know, I just expected more from them.”

**Seasoned Teacher (Mr. Goodin Tensions):** “I see; so what did you do about it?”

**New Teacher 1 (Mr. Energy):** “I gave them a speech about my expectations and let them know how disappointed I was; then, I gave the class the High School Consequence’s Activity to complete by tomorrow. This is not the first time for this poor behavior with a substitute.”

**Seasoned Teacher (Mr. Goodin Tensions):** “Listen; the mice will play while the cat is away as the old saying goes.”

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*Mr. Goodin Tensions finishes his lunch and leaves. The other teachers walk out with him. The support staff members start talking about the incident. Later that evening, Kyle’s father, Mr. Fair, listens to his son’s account of the incident. He calls the school the next day and talks to Ms. Flap. He asks her about the incident and she tells all she knows, trying to be helpful, managing only to throw fuel on the fire.*

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**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** “Thank you for calling Exceptional High School. How may I help you?”

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** “This is Mr. Fair. I am calling concerning an incident in Mr. Energy’s class. Is he available?”

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** “Hello Mr. Fair. I am sorry sir, but he is unable to come to the phone at this time. He is working to get his class back under control because while he was out, the students gave the substitute a hard time.”

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** “Students giving the sub a hard time? That would never happen...”

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** “I heard they were really bad, spit balls and all. The substitute left an angry note and requested to never be placed in Mr. Energy’s class again.”

**Parent (Mr. Fair):** “Hmmm that must have been some class. Did anything else happen?”

**Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap):** “I heard there was some commotion about losing extra credit points, but I don’t have all the facts. Would you like to leave a message?”



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Parent (Mr. Fair): “No, that won’t be necessary. Goodbye.”

*Setting the Scene: After Mr. Fair speaks with the support staff member, Ms. Flap, he writes an e-mail to the teacher, Mr. Energy. He is upset with the situation.*

To: [teacher@publicschool.com](mailto:teacher@publicschool.com)

From: [Bill.Fair@freeaccount.com](mailto:Bill.Fair@freeaccount.com)

Subject: Concern about 2<sup>nd</sup> period incident

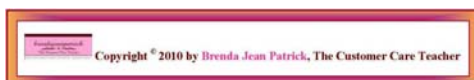
Mr. Energy, I hate to make our first contact a negative experience, but I feel that you have made a bad choice on your punishment for your 2<sup>nd</sup> period class that is going to have a negative impact on my son, Kyle’s 6 week grade. I called the school and spoke with someone in the front office who verified the situation. My son brought home to me this High School Consequence’s Activity that he was required by you to fill out in reference to Friday’s 2<sup>nd</sup> period class when you had a substitute teacher. It appears from my son’s story that the substitute had a bad experience with your 2<sup>nd</sup> period class.

Kyle informed me that the substitute teacher had left a note informing you that the class did not behave. Her note also attached a short list of students that had not caused any trouble. I was also informed that the punishment you chose for your class was to fill out this High School Consequence’s Activity along with that, students would lose their extra credit they had **earned** on the crossword project last week. I have many issues with this choice and will line out the problems I have with them along with the solution I **expect** to happen with my son.

1. Blanket punishment on your class is absolutely ridiculous and not fair to the students that were not causing problems. I’m sure you know my son by now and know he is anything but a problem student. I am also pretty sure that your substitute teacher, who does not know every students’ name in your class, did not include every student she felt was behaving properly.

2. Taking away a student’s extra credit points that were **earned** prior to the event in question. If there is anything in this punishment that disappoints me even more is that you would stoop low enough to take away a student’s extra credit that was **earned** and **approved** by you prior to this event (see attachment) without solid and verifiable evidence that the student caused any problem.

3. Ordering your students to fill out a form that basically says they misbehaved, even if this was not the case and then telling them that the form needed to be filled out completely and returned to your classroom the next day knowing they do not have your class that day. To top that off, then you tell them if it is not back, they are going to get an office referral.



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I understand that it is very irritating to come back from a day off from school and find out that your class has given the substitute problems. From my son's story, this has happened before, but there are a lot of better options that could have been done to resolve this problem. If you would like to discuss those, I will be more than happy to list them at a later date. As far as Kyle's situation goes, the following is what I **expect to happen** and I will take this up the chain if it doesn't occur.

1. Kyle will not be returning this High School Consequence's Activity because he has nothing to write on it in reference to bad behavior in your class.
2. Kyle will receive his 3 extra credit points on his 6 week test grade as you promised when this project was given to the class.
3. Kyle will not receive any retaliation due to my e-mail to you.

My son is not perfect, but if you look at his history of behavior in school since kindergarten I would challenge you to find a teacher that would not speak highly of him. This incident in your class bothered him very much due to the fact that he felt like he was being forced to lie on a paper about behavior in which he did not participate, along with losing his extra credit that he felt he had earned.

I will be checking with Kyle about his 6 weeks test score when it is released and verifying that the bonus points were added as promised and hope this will be the last conversation we need to have on this subject. If for any reason you would like to discuss this in person, I will be more than happy to meet with you at your convenience before, during or after school.

Bill Fair  
555.555.5555 Home  
777.777.7777 Mobile

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*Mr. Energy reads email...emotions and thoughts are running through his head...  
He responds to Mr. Fair in an e-mail.*

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To: [Bill.Fair@freeaccount.com](mailto:Bill.Fair@freeaccount.com)  
From: [teacher@publicschool.com](mailto:teacher@publicschool.com)  
Subject: RE: Concern about 2<sup>nd</sup> period incident

Mr. Fair,

Thank you for taking the time to respond so thoroughly and sharing your concerns about Friday and Tuesday's events. I understand that you are frustrated and feel that your child was treated unfairly and is being punished for actions that he did not participate in. Please know that hearing how upset Kyle is and



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the fact that he feels this way causes me great concern. I genuinely care about each student that I teach and do my very best to treat each student fairly and with great respect.

Let me explain first that no one who earned their 3 point bonus is losing their points on the test. Last Thursday was like the "Play Off" student review where they earned 3 points and Friday was the "World Series" where the students **could earn** an ADDITIONAL 2 points IF they had elected to participate in the bonus round on my teacher review.

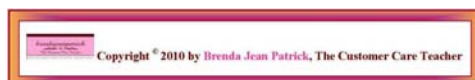
The concept on Friday was now that you completed the playoffs and have your 3 points you can now choose to go head to head with me for an additional 2 point conversion or just complete the "World Series" review and not risk your score on that review for the additional 2 points. Friday's "game" review would have those competing to risk their guaranteed points in a *chance* to score high enough on my review for them to earn 2 MORE points. Obviously, many did not want to risk their 3 points for 2 more and I expected this, which is why I designed the lesson to ensure that every student earned 3 points no matter what! This got them all motivated and raised the bar of the review ;-)  
*\*\* Note: while no one had to risk the points on the World Series review with me, each student DID have to complete the teacher World Series review for study purposes! Only those "risking" that their score on my review would be high enough to earn the additional 2 points ;-)*

So, Friday's World Series 2 point reward *option* was taken away for those who had entered their tickets for that game review as the substitute's notes said my 2<sup>nd</sup> period class never fully finished the "Teacher Review" due to the "impossible" behaviors in class. The High School Consequence's Activity clearly states it was the World Series points that were to be taken. No student who earned their 3 points is losing them. If this was not clearly understood then, I apologize.

I assigned the High School Consequence's Activity to be done by all the students because I have had 4 or 5 bad reports on this class's behavior while I was away. The few students who "didn't have to do the High School Consequence's Activity" prior to this will be doing so this week.

It is my pedagogy and teaching style to reflect at the day's end over my teaching, the day's events, etc. and make adjustments where needed for the next class day, so that I am always flexible and forward thinking in ways to ensure best practice for the success of my students. I reflected at the end of the day yesterday and realized quickly that the High School Consequence's Activity assigned was a result of cumulative reports and not just this one incident. Thus, all the students in my 2<sup>nd</sup> period class will need to reflect and do the High School Consequence's Activity assigned. Since it was the end of the day, I had not had a chance to tell the few that didn't do their High School Consequence's Activity yesterday this news.

I understand Kyle was upset and I apologize that he felt badly about the situation. He, as you mentioned, is a remarkable student who is not in any way a behavioral issue in class. At Exceptional High School, we



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are based upon students making positive, productive *choices* that reflect the level of excellence we expect. Clearly, Kyle is a shining example of this!

The practice of the High School Consequence's Activity I assigned the students is for their continued growth at school. I realize perfect is impossible; it is not the destination, rather the journey of working to be our best that matters. Reflective practice offers students opportunities to evaluate their own journey for their success! Their assignment was to reflect on the events of how the students or they themselves behaved in class while I was away. Understanding that not every student made poor choices in this situation, I hoped those feeling upset by the assignment would let me know by talking with me, or seize the opportunity to share and reflect on not the burden of misbehaving like others may have, but perhaps reflect on how he or she could have followed the EHS expectation of being the "Upstander" trying to help the substitute with asking peers to remember the expectations of EHS etc.....

I am in no way suggesting Kyle was culpable in his behaviors last Friday or any of the other previous dates in question. Again, the objective was reflection for growth and for many focuses on solutions and alternative options of behaviors.

You have my assurance sir that Kyle will be awarded his 3 points, as will the entire class. These were never taken away. I appreciate your input and welcome any opportunity to further address your concerns should you have them. Communication between teachers and parents is so critical in optimizing student success. I can tell you are a supportive, caring parent who only wants the best for his child. I assure you, that is my wish and daily pledge to all my students!

Educationally yours,  
Mr. Energy, M.Ed.

9th English  
Exceptional High School  
[teacher@publicschool.com](mailto:teacher@publicschool.com)  
444-444-444 Ext: 2222

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*Mr. Fair called back to the school as a follow-up, as he had stated in his e-mail. Mr. Fair is annoyed that Mr. Energy responded so nicely to his blunt e-mail. He questions his motives... His call was answered by another support staff member, Ms. Polished. She was professional, listened to his story, and confirmed that the issue had been addressed and corrected.*

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**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Good afternoon, Exceptional High School. This is Ms. Polished. How may I direct your call?”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “This is Mr. Fair. I am calling to follow-up on a situation with Mr. Energy.”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Mr. Fair, I am pleased that you called to follow-up on your son, Kyle. It shows support and genuine interest in his success. I can tell you that the matter has been addressed and corrected.”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “Good. Did Mr. Energy get reprimanded or written up? Is Mr. Energy like the other teachers?”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Sir. The answer to the first question is for you and the principal to discuss. As far as the second question, if you mean, does Mr. Energy value every student and set high expectations for them to succeed, then yes, he is like other teachers.”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “Is Mr. Energy new to the district, new to education, or both? Is he a good teacher?”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Sir those are questions for Mr. Energy or the principal. I am not comfortable discussing another colleague in this manner.”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “I called before and the lady that answered the phone was quite forthcoming with information.”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Mr. Fair, if you would like information, I would be happy to assist you in getting in direct contact with Mr. Energy or the principal. I assure you, professionalism and courtesy are of utmost importance to us here at Exceptional High School. Students and their success are our top priority.”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “Thank you. If the situation has been addressed...”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Yes sir, it has been addressed. Is there anything else I can do for you today, Mr. Fair?”

**Father (Mr. Fair):** “No, that will be all. Thank you.”

**Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished):** “Please do not hesitate to call us if we can be of assistance. Thank you for calling. Have a fabulous day.”

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Questions to ponder...

1. Discuss and analyze what was “wrong” with the first phone conversation between the parent, Mr. Fair and the support staff member, Ms. Flap? What should have been done differently?
2. What should the seasoned teacher, Mr. Goodin Intensions, have recommended to Mr. Energy regarding strategies to respond to the situation using customer care?
3. What could Mr. Energy have said or done differently to increase customer care consciousness in his classroom? (using customer care with students)  
Site at least 5 items.
4. Predict at least five areas of concern/control that Mr. Energy must address after reading Mr. Fair’s e-mail and before replying to the parent email.
5. List 10 items that showed customer care in Mr. Energy’s reply e-mail.  
Document five items that were incorrect according to customer care protocol when emailing using customer care.
6. Reflecting back, what are some major differences between Support Staff 1 (Ms. Flap) and Support Staff 2 (Ms. Polished)? What was the role Ms. Polish was playing?  
What was she trying to accomplish and why?
7. Why should educators care about how other educators respond to parents when they ask probing questions for information?

