

# AT THE DOOR

*Positive Greetings at the Door asks every student for eye contact, a touch, or a spoken greeting on the way in — on demand, in front of everyone, at the exact moment of transition. It comes out of PBIS, which comes out of behaviorism.*

## A DOORWAY IS NOT A CHECKPOINT.

A GREETING YOU HAVE TO GET PAST IS NOT A GREETING

### WHAT IT ASKS FOR

Eye contact. Touch. Speech. Each on cue, in front of an audience. Every one of those is a known access barrier on its own — and PGD asks for them together, at the one moment of the day a person has least capacity to spare.

### THE THRESHOLD IS ALREADY THE HARD PART

Exposure anxiety, threshold anxiety and situational mutism are widespread among us, and their intensity is overwhelming. The doorway was the hardest moment in the room before anyone decided to put a ritual in it.

### IT MAKES A GUARDIAN OF THE TEACHER

A PGD policy turns the person at the door into a *threshold guardian* — someone you have to get past by performing. That is an exhausting and dysregulating way to start a day, and it is not what the teacher standing there wanted either.

***“Compliance is not the goal. A good start to the day is the goal.”***

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## FIRST: YOU DON'T NEED IT

- **Don't post a threshold ritual at all.** There are better ways to invite people into a shared space than a gate they must clear, and the door is the worst possible place to put one.
- **Greet the room, not each body.** Warmth that does not require a response from a named individual is warmth everyone can receive.
- **Let arrival be quiet.** Someone getting through the door at all may already have spent more than you can see.

## WHAT IT COSTS WHEN YOU DON'T

Trust and authenticity matter enormously to many Autistic people. Forcing us to perform neuronormativity and toxic positivity destroys both. Coercing someone into a cheerfulness they do not feel is an attempt to **overwrite another person's reality** — and it feeds school-induced anxiety rather than easing it.

## NOT:

- ✓ not a greeting – if you have to get past it, it is a gate
- ✓ not warmth – a ritual you are required to perform is not warmth
- ✓ not “just being friendly” – the studies cited for PGD are behaviorist in framing and language
- ✓ not the teacher's fault – PGD is usually policy, and policy is the thing that changes

## IF YOU MUST, ALLOW ALL OF THESE

- ✓ spoken
- ✓ fist bump
- ✓ handshake
- ✓ thumbs up
- ✓ hug
- ✓ virtual hug
- ✓ head nod
- ✓ sign of the horns
- ✓ – and no response at all

**That last one is the whole thing.** A menu of eight performances with no opt-out is still a checkpoint. Supporting multiple modalities and real flexibility is good Universal Design for Learning; requiring one of eight is not. Forcing students to perform against their mood is a bad start to the day. Forcing them to be false to themselves is counterproductive on its own terms.

*Behaviorist education is ableist education. You don't need to do door greetings.*

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Adapted from the *Positive Greetings at the Door* Why Sheet at [stimpunks.org/why/positive-greetings-at-the-door](https://stimpunks.org/why/positive-greetings-at-the-door), which carries the full sources and the signatories. The two studies usually cited in favour of PGD are Cook et al. (2018), *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, and Allday & Pakurar on teacher greetings and on-task behaviour; the Why Sheet's objection is to their behaviorist framing, and it links both so you can read them yourself. The modality list is adapted from Edutopia's "Welcoming Students With a Smile," with the opt-out added. "Overwrite another person's reality" is **Shea Emma Fett**, "10 Things I Wish I'd Known About Gaslighting." Related at [stimpunks.org](https://stimpunks.org): exposure anxiety, threshold anxiety, situational mutism, neuronormativity, toxic positivity, school-induced anxiety, UDL, and the *Behaviorism* and *Eye Contact* broadsides.