

Classroom management practice guide

Planning for classroom management

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Effective classroom management creates safe and supportive learning environments for all students. This practice guide is part of a suite of foundational resources for beginning teachers, teachers working in new environments, or experienced teachers who want to refine or refresh specific elements of their classroom management practice. They can be used to individually reflect on and refine one's own practice, or as shared resources to support mentoring and other collaborative and whole-school approaches to improving classroom management.

The Australian Education Research Organisation (AERO)'s guidance is based on a synthesis of the most rigorous and relevant research evidence and guidance on classroom management from a wide range of research experts and expert practitioners across Australia and internationally.

This practice guide will provide practical guidance on planning for classroom management and the creation of safe and supportive learning environments.

Planning for classroom management is important preparation for [building positive connections](#) and modelling, teaching, revising and reinforcing the [expectations](#), [routines](#) and [rules](#) of the classroom. Effective planning will support you in promoting positive learning behaviours, reducing disengaged and disruptive behaviours, and effectively responding when they do occur.

To effectively plan for classroom management and the development of safe and supportive learning environments, it is important to:

- Reflect on your classroom management practices and skills to focus your initial planning.
- Plan for the first day and the first few weeks.
- Continue to reflect on the impact of your practices and skills to plan for classroom management throughout the school year.

Reflect on your classroom management practices and skills

Every teacher, no matter how experienced, can reflect on and refine their classroom management practices and skills. Reflection during the initial planning phase and over time can provide insights to enhance your practices and focus your planning.

Some questions to ask yourself when reflecting on the effectiveness of your classroom management:

- To what extent is the learning environment you develop safe and supportive for all students?
- How do you impact the students and learning environment in which you teach?
- How does your thinking about how students should behave in class impact the way you manage your classroom? Why do you think that way? Do you take into consideration views and perspectives that are different from your own when understanding why students are behaving in particular ways? And do you reflect on these views and perspectives to grow and adapt your approach and expectations, and/or evolve the support you provide?
- How do your beliefs and knowledge about teaching, learning, curriculum and classroom management influence how you form relationships with your students and set expectations?
- How do you [build positive connections](#) and [establish positive relationships with all students](#)?
- How do you maximise learning time through high expectations, routines and rules?
- To what extent are [expectations](#), [routines](#) and [rules](#) consistently demonstrated by students? How frequently are you required to prompt them? What does this mean for teaching and revising the expectations, routines and rules?
- How does your approach to classroom management support your students to meet behaviour expectations? Are there any areas that you need to prioritise for refinement?

The following table lists classroom management skills and practices that create safe and supportive learning environments and maximise learning time.

Skills	Practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement and praise • Circulation • Clear communication • Deliberate pause • Non-verbal correction • Scanning • Voice control. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High expectations for student behaviour, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Setting behaviour expectations for completing learning tasks. • Routines, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Entrance routine – Exit routine – Gaining all students' attention – Students gaining the teachers' attention – Moving to other areas of the school. • Relationships, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Building positive connections with all students. • Establishing and maintaining rules. • Responding to disengaged and disruptive behaviours.

Using the skills and practices table in this section, consider the following questions:

- Are there any skills or practices you need to refine to support your classroom management?
- Which skill or practice would be most beneficial as an immediate focus for refining your classroom management?
- How do you plan for daily and long-term reflection on the effectiveness of your classroom management?
- How will you review and refine your skills and practice over the term or year?

Plan for the first day and the first few weeks

The better prepared you are for your first interactions with students, the greater the impact on the connections you build, the learning environment you create, and students' focus on learning.

Using the checklists in each section, plan how you'll make a positive start to managing your classroom. It's important to self-assess and identify the highest priority focus for creating and maintaining a safe and supportive learning environment. Consider what's achievable and how you can work towards completing these actions over time.

Develop reflexive practice to enhance responsiveness

Reflexive practice supports teachers to consider how their individual perspectives impact the way they teach. Consider:

What are my perspectives of what is happening in my classroom? Why do I think that way? Where did I get that knowledge from?

How do my perspectives impact how I respond to the students in my classroom?

How do my perspectives impact the way I teach my students?

Reflecting on these questions on your own or with a critical friend or colleague will help you be responsive in creating a classroom environment where all students feel safe and are able to learn.

Get to know your students and their families

Read the [Positive Teacher–Student Relationships](#) explainer to re-familiarise yourself with the importance of relationships with students.

Read the [Building Positive Connections with All Students](#) guide for more detailed guidance on getting to know your students and their families.

If you know your future students before the end of the year, arrange opportunities to meet and observe them in their current classes, starting to build positive connections and knowledge of your students where possible.

Meet with your students' previous teachers and support staff to discuss students' strengths and needs. Read through student profiles to learn names and family arrangements, and identify academic, behavioural, social and emotional strengths, needs and plans, required reasonable adjustments, and medical conditions and treatments.

Plan how you'll introduce yourself to parents and primary caregivers before the first day or soon after, and how you'll contact the parents or primary caregivers of students with additional learning needs.

Prepare a short 'getting to know you' activity for the first day to start to learn about and build positive connections with your students.

Plan how you'll engage with students and their families to support classroom management and students' focus on learning.

Continue to build positive connections with your students beyond initial interactions and the first day. Aim to set time aside so you can prioritise this to support learning, behaviour and relationships in your classroom. Are there previous teachers you can talk to? Are there teaching assistants who can help you? Can you review an [expectation](#), [routine](#) or [rule](#) that isn't quite working?

Teach the expectations, routines and rules

Read the [High Expectations for Student Behaviour](#) explainer and familiarise yourself with the school expectations for behaviour, including the [behaviour expectations for completing learning tasks](#). In the absence of clear school expectations, draft your own behaviour expectations for your students.

Use the [Clear Communication](#) and [Voice Control](#) practice resources to script and rehearse how you'll articulate your expectations. Plan for how you want students to demonstrate them.

Read the [Teaching Routines](#) explainer. Identify your school's [entrance routine](#), [exit routine](#), [routine for students moving through the school](#), and methods for [gaining all students' attention](#) and [students gaining your attention](#). In the absence of whole-school routines, plan your own using these resources. Identify any other regular routines you need to establish and plan the steps of these.

Use the [Clear Communication](#) and [Voice Control](#) practice resources to script and rehearse how you'll introduce and teach:

- [entrance and exit routines](#), and methods for [gaining all students' attention](#) and students [gaining your attention](#) on the first day.
- other important routines such as [setting behaviour expectations for completing learning tasks](#) and [moving to other areas of the school](#) prior to them being needed.

Read the [Establishing and Maintaining Rules](#) practice resource explainer. Identify your school's rules for classroom behaviour. In the absence of whole-school rules, draft your own.

Use the [Clear Communication](#) and [Voice Control](#) practice resources to script and rehearse how you'll teach the rules to your students.

Prepare your classroom

Make sure the classroom is welcoming and organised, ensuring a safe and functional learning environment. Consider visual prompts that will be used daily – for example, a visual timetable, expectations, routines and rules, and display them so they're easily seen and referenced by students.

Plan where students will put their bags, books and equipment, and how you'll manage this on the first day, then every day following this – for example, identify bag racks or hooks, label storage places around the room, and identify what items students will keep at their desks and elsewhere. Plan to go through this together as a class on the first day and how you'll reinforce this with students after.

Classroom arrangement, such as desk layout, is important for [gaining all students' attention](#), [scanning](#), teaching, [circulating](#), interacting with students, and students working in various ways, including with partners or in groups. Plan an age-appropriate seating arrangement that will support focused learning behaviours in the classroom. Rows and other forward-facing arrangements ensure that students can see you.

- Which students with specific needs need to be considered?
- Which students work well together?
- Which students would benefit from sitting closer to the exit or near the front, back or side of the room?
- Can students easily move to the various parts of the classroom they need to access?

Plan to regularly review student seating arrangements. Are modifications or changes needed from your knowledge of students' needs or focus on learning in the classroom?

Decide the resources and displays you'll have available to support student learning. These should be accessible to students and away from the area where you mainly teach to avoid distractions.

Decide where you will display student learning and achievements.

Consider how you can acknowledge or physically represent the diverse cultures of the students.

Ensure that all teaching materials are prepared for the first day.

Respond to student behaviour

Read the [Acknowledgement and Praise](#) practice resource and complete the 'rehearsing on your own' section. By scripting and rehearsing, you'll have pre-prepared phrases to use to acknowledge, praise and encourage students to demonstrate the expected behaviours from the first day.

Read the school behaviour policy to identify the school's processes for responding to behaviour, including disengaged and disruptive behaviours.

Read the [Responding to Disengaged and Disruptive Behaviours](#) practice guide. Work through the 'Rehearse and practise' section to prepare responses to disengaged and disruptive behaviours that you may encounter.

Use the [Clear Communication](#) and [Voice Control](#) practice resources to script and rehearse how you'll teach students your responses to disengaged and disruptive behaviours so they're aware of your expectations and responses.

[Building positive connections](#) with students and establishing classroom expectations, routines and rules through explicit teaching and practise takes time. Spend the first few weeks teaching, rehearsing, reinforcing, correcting and re-teaching the expectations, routines and rules that will build the foundation of your safe and supportive classroom for the remainder of the year.

Reflect and plan throughout the school year

When planning for teaching and learning, include prompts or reminders to use specific skills or practices that support positive behaviour – for example, cues to use [acknowledgement and praise](#), when to [circulate](#), or students you need to check in with.

Planning for positive behaviour may be something you do individually or with a colleague. Considering how to support positive behaviour during classroom activities, transitions, students' interactions with you and their peers, and daily routines is crucial for creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

To effectively support positive student behaviour each day:

Plan how you'll [build positive connections](#) with students over time.

Plan for how students will:

- complete learning tasks (individually, in pairs, in groups or as a whole class)
- access and use the resources required for learning tasks
- be seated to support their focus on learning
- transition between tasks
- move around the room.

Ensure all learning materials are ready before students arrive.

Ensure the classroom is organised, safe and functional.

Regular reflection can help you identify what's effective in your classroom management and what you can focus on refining. When reflecting, consider:

- When and how is your classroom management supporting students to be safe and focus on learning? What classroom management skills or practices are you using in those moments?
- What skill or practice could you refine to manage your classroom even more effectively? How do you know? What feedback have you received from students or colleagues that has helped you identify this skill or practice?
- What's one thing you'll focus on improving in your use of this skill or practice in your next lesson?
- Schedule a short period of time in the near future to focus on refining this skill or practice using one of the skill or practice resources within the suite of resources.

Questions for reflection

Once you've applied the advice in this guide to plan for classroom management, consider:

- How regularly do you now reflect on your classroom management skills and practices? What impact does this have on you and your students?
- What differences do you notice when you proactively plan for classroom management?
- How can you further refine your planning to create safe and supportive learning environments through effective classroom management?

For more practical guidance

AERO has developed a suite of resources to support teachers and school leaders to refine or refresh their foundational practices in creating safe and supportive learning environments through effective classroom management. You can read the [Classroom Management Resources: User Guide](#) for an overview of these resources and suggestions for their use.