



## Teaching Tips: Run a Safe Classroom Environment

DID YOU KNOW



Remember you are a ‘guest teacher’ in place of the permanent teacher. In most cases, you should leave the classroom environment the same way you found it - resist the urge to “reorganize” things if you happen to feel the permanent teacher is “messy”. They may take offense at your well-intentioned actions. With a little bit of planning ahead of time and some basic classroom management techniques, you can help provide the best learning environment possible.

### Safe and Secure Equals Effective Classroom Management

Students need to feel safe in order to learn. They need to feel secure in order to want to participate. There are a number of things teachers can do to set up classrooms that feel safe and well-organized. Here are some tips:



- **Learn the specific environment before class.** Note the location of the resources that you’ll need based on the lesson plan – books, calculators, materials, etc. – so you can find them, within easy reach, so that you never have to stop teaching or turn your back on your students.
- **Make it easy to supervise** your students.
  - Some schools place mirrors next to the dry erase board and the chalk board so that even when you may have to turn your back to write on the board, you can still keep an eye on students.
  - Ask students to write on the board for you. It encourages students to be directly involved, it helps them develop a basic skill – writing so that others can read what they write, and most importantly, it will save you work and allows you to keep your face to the students. Keeping your face to the students is important for good classroom control, especially when you’re using active teaching methods that invite

student participation. Involved students are not going to be quiet, and being able to monitor their behavior helps keep things orderly. In the long run, engaging students in learning will make all your teaching more effective.

- **Walk around.** Your movement around the classroom helps make your teaching more engaging. It also helps with classroom control.
- **Make it safe for students to participate and ask questions.** No matter what a student says, make it a habit to respond with respect. Model respect for your students, and teach them to show respect for one another.

It is also important to think about the environment of the school, beyond the classroom.



When you stand in the hallway or cafeteria, what do you see? What do you hear? Some schools feel like prisons, where students may not even be allowed to talk, and students may seem overly compliant. Other schools can

be totally out of control. Both extremes are likely to take something away from the learning experience. Work together with other teachers and administrators to encourage positive interaction among students.

Some schools have given a lot of attention to what happens in all areas of the building, working hard to make sure students are always well supervised by adults. They may taken additional measures to cut down on fights by improving traffic flow through the hallways by staggering the times classes dismiss, or removing obstacles such as trash cans.

Be conscious of the environment in your school and classroom. When you create a climate of safety and respect, learning will follow.