Amplifying student voice in positive classroom environments



## Key points

* Positive classroom environments are ones in which students experience a sense of belonging and feel safe asking questions and taking risks with their learning. They are emotionally and physically safe and engaging spaces.
* Involving students in the design of their classroom gives them **voice**, **choice** and **influence** and supports **collaboration**.
* The physical classroom environment should be flexible and adaptable to the needs of different students and different learning activities.
* When possible, give students **choices** about where they do their work. For example, sitting on the floor or sitting in groups at desks.
* Well-designed classroom spaces do not need to be expensive or time consuming.
* Find out more about flexible learning spaces [here](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-for-the-future/learning-space).
* The Learning Space toolkit provides strategies for schools that are engaged in change. More information can be found [here](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/curriculum/learning-for-the-future/learning-space/learning-space-toolkit).
* Create a positive classroom environment by forming positive relationships with and between students, designing a welcoming and flexible learning space, setting high expectations of students with explicit learning goals and opportunities to build pro-social and leadership skills.
* Safe, supportive environments will facilitate student **voice**, **participation** and **collaboration**.

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| Classroom environment checklist | Never | Rarely | Usually | Always |
| **Forming positive relationships with and between students** |  |  |  |  |
| Students are greeted by name in a friendly manner |  |  |  |  |
| Students are given opportunities to share their interests |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers show an interest in their students’ lives and activities beyond school |  |  |  |  |
| Teachers model respect through positive body language, expression and words |  |  |  |  |
| **Designing a welcoming and flexible learning space** |  |  |  |  |
| Student suggestions are included in classroom organisation and layout plans |  |  |  |  |
| Student ownership is supported through student work being displayed |  |  |  |  |
| The classroom layout is flexible, supporting collaborative or independent work |  |  |  |  |
| The classroom layout and resources support inclusion and is sensitive to the needs of students with additional needs. |  |  |  |  |
| Students’ storage and materials are organised and accessible |  |  |  |  |
| Furniture placement supports easy movement around the room and teacher supervision |  |  |  |  |
| The daily schedule/timetable is displayed and reviewed regularly |  |  |  |  |
| There is a method for displaying changes to the schedule |  |  |  |  |
| Students are given choices about where they sit to complete tasks |  |  |  |  |
| **Teaching and learning** |  |  |  |  |
| High expectations are held for all students’ learning |  |  |  |  |
| Learning goals are made explicit and are referred to |  |  |  |  |
| Students negotiate individual learning goals with their teachers |  |  |  |  |
| Classroom rules are linked to school-wide expectations and are displayed and referred to consistently |  |  |  |  |
| **Building capacity** |  |  |  |  |
| Time is allocated for student to give feedback and suggestions |  |  |  |  |
| Students are taught skills for active listening and working collaboratively |  |  |  |  |
| Students are given opportunities to work collaboratively |  |  |  |  |