

# Safety in the classroom

NEW SOUTH WALES  
DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION  
AND TRAINING



OHS Directorate

Teachers are required to provide adequate supervision and quality instruction in the delivery of relevant, well prepared, engaging and motivating content and activities to ensure the health and safety of those in their care. The level of supervision and instruction needs to be commensurate with the maturity and skill level of students.

In planning classroom activities, a risk management approach needs to be taken. Teachers need to identify potential hazards, assess risks and select the most appropriate way of eliminating or controlling them before undertaking activities with students. Relevant Departmental policies and procedures must be considered when planning classroom activities. The tools and materials below will assist staff with their planning and ensure the health and safety of students and staff. Principals need to ensure that teachers and SASS staff with classroom responsibilities have a good understanding of duty of care, safety in the classroom, child protection and student welfare. These issues should be discussed regularly in staff meetings, faculty and stage meetings.

## Key points

### Teachers should:

- ◆ Plan for safety of students and themselves, taking a [risk management](#) approach to school activities.
- ◆ Take into account the learning outcomes against the hazards and inherent dangers of engaging in activities.
- ◆ Develop class behaviour rules and consequences.
- ◆ Establish clear and workable routines for entering and leaving rooms, moving around the classroom and school, distributing and collecting materials and resources, manual handling and working independently or in groups.
- ◆ Assess and manage risks in specific subject areas e.g. Science and Visual Arts.
- ◆ Avoid hazardous activities where their own level of skill or knowledge may be limited
- ◆ Use resources, including machinery and equipment, appropriate to the maturity and skill of students.
- ◆ Instruct students in safety issues, such as safe use of equipment prior to commencing each activity.
- ◆ Ensure appropriate use is made of all safeguards, safety devices and personal protective equipment. See [Guarding of equipment and machinery](#).

- ◆ Ensure sufficient workspace is available for students to work safely.
- ◆ Provide students with appropriate workplace health and safety information and training.
- ◆ Implement the school's student welfare and discipline code.
- ◆ Adhere to sun protection guidelines during outdoor activities.
- ◆ Follow sound behaviour management practices.
- ◆ Address the welfare and safety needs of special needs groups.
- ◆ Strictly follow child protection guidelines.
- ◆ Take reasonable care of themselves in the classroom.
- ◆ Look after their voices. See [OHS induction](#) for school based staff, voice care.
- ◆ Use appropriate [ladders](#) or approved devices if working above ground level e.g. hanging displays. Do not work with feet at heights over 2 metres. Only mature students should be allowed to work above ground level, with instruction and supervision.

### Principals need to:

- ◆ Provide instruction, information, training, supervision and support to teachers to ensure they maintain safety in the classroom.
- ◆ Address the safety issues raised by teachers.
- ◆ Address breaches of safety and classroom incidents without delay.

## Support materials

[Classroom safety inspection checklist](#)

## Further information

[Management Guidelines for Safe Working and Learning](#)

[Induction packages](#) (handouts on classroom safety, voice care, workplace violence etc)

[Excursions](#)

[Student behaviour](#)

[Sharp objects](#)

[DET Code of Conduct](#)

[Legal Issues Bulletin No 28](#), Collection, use and disclosure of information about students with a history of violence