

Using Environmental Scan



Consider these questions when assessing how the physical set-up of the classroom supports the needs of all students.

Boot room

- Is there adequate and clearly labelled storage for students' outside clothes, backpacks and lunch bags?
- Is there adequate space so students can remove or put on outer clothes without crowding?
- Is the coat area easy to supervise and located close to the teaching area?

Student desks/tables

- Does the desk/table arrangement allow all students to:
 - see the teaching area
 - participate in class discussion
 - have adequate space to work independently?
- Are there particular seating spots that accommodate students with major attention difficulties?
- Are student desks/tables the appropriate size and in good repair?

Storage of equipment and material

- Is there a designated area for students to put their homework books/agendas at the beginning of the school day?
- Is there adequate storage for students' personal school supplies?
- Is shelving organized and clutter-free?
- Are storage areas labelled so students can find and return materials independently?
- Is there a storage area where materials and equipment can be stored out of sight?
- Are books displayed so students can see covers and are encouraged to read?

Work areas

- Are the areas in the classroom clearly defined?
- Is a private, secluded space available where students can work quietly by themselves or use as a safe place to calm down?



Physical set-up of the classroom

- Do the colours of the room create a calming, harmonious environment?
- Does the furniture arrangement allow for good traffic flow?
- Are the major traffic areas located away from the main work area?
- Do wall displays contribute to a sense of order?
- Are non-essential decorations kept to a minimum?
- Are all areas of the classroom visible to the teacher so they can be monitored and supervised throughout the school day?

Sound

- Do the acoustics allow teachers and students to clearly and easily hear one another when speaking at normal conversational volume?
- Are carpeting or chair leg protectors used to muffle the noise of moving chairs and desks?
- Are there clear classroom expectations about talking during activities?
- Is music used to cue transitions and provide a calming background to enhance students' ability to focus on specific tasks?
- Are sounds from the hallway and windows sufficiently muffled?
- Is the school-wide messaging system used at set times during the day so teachers can encourage students to focus listening?
- Is the sound quality of the intercom clear and at an appropriate volume?
- Is there minimal sound from lights and the heating system?

Lighting

- Are lights in good repair with minimal humming and flickering?
- Is the lighting adequate for a range of learning activities?

Visual cues

- Are signs and pictures at the eye level of students?
- Is an easy-to-read daily schedule clearly visible?
- Are classroom rules written in positive language and posted for easy reference?
- Are classroom supplies and equipment clearly labelled to establish ownership, and facilitate retrieval and storage?
- Are only essential visuals posted?
- Are the visual cues in the classroom student-friendly and consistent with learning?

