

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Calm down spaces



Calm down spaces provide a designated area for students who are experiencing strong emotions and are having difficulties regulating those emotions. The student should be able to use the calm down space whenever they feel it's necessary without punishment.

- Discuss with the School Counsellor or Learning and Wellbeing staff the need for, setup of and introduction of the calm down space to the classroom.
- Use a quiet area of the classroom that is easily accessible to the student and observable by the teacher which allows the student to quietly go to environment when they feel overwhelmed to regulate their emotions and feel safe.
- Collaboratively set up the calm down space with the student(s). The space should not be over stimulating and contain a few items that are familiar to the student.
- Include items to help the student relax and refocus until they are ready to return to class. For examples, a bean bag and noise cancelling headphones to remove a lot of sensory stimulation, or activities that a student can engage in to calm down such as colouring in pages or books.
- Provide students gentle reminders that the calm down space is available for them rather than directing them to the calm down space in response to behaviour.
- Place a five to ten minute time limit on the use of the calm down space. Have a planned process should the calm down space not be effective within the time limit. The time limit may be gradually reduced as the student becomes more effective at calming using the space.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>