



Low-Demand Classroom Environment

Audit checklist for teachers

A low-demand classroom is not a chaotic classroom. It is one where demands are carefully considered, unnecessary pressure is removed, and genuine agency is given to students. This checklist helps you audit your current classroom against low-demand principles.

Language

- ■ Instructions are framed as choices where possible ("Would you like to...?" rather than "You need to...")
- ■ Time warnings are given before transitions ("We'll be moving on in about 5 minutes")
- ■ Corrections are given privately — never publicly
- ■ Praise is descriptive and low-key rather than effusive ("You finished the first part — well done")
- ■ "No" is delivered with an explanation and an alternative where possible

Physical Environment

- ■ Seating is flexible — option to move or change position
- ■ The student has a recognised personal space they can return to
- ■ Lighting levels can be adjusted if needed
- ■ Background noise is managed — option for quieter work areas
- ■ Visual clutter is minimised around the student's main work area

Task Design

- ■ Tasks are presented in steps — not as one large, overwhelming chunk
- ■ There is flexibility in how tasks can be completed (format, order, partner/solo)
- ■ The student knows what is expected — and how long it will take
- ■ There is genuine choice embedded in learning activities
- ■ Academic demand is calibrated to energy levels — not assumed constant all day

Transition Management

- ■ Transitions are announced in advance — not sudden
- ■ The student is given a warning before activity changes
- ■ The same person manages transition support consistently
- ■ There is a brief low-demand settling period after transitions

Relationships and Trust



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- ■ There is at least one consistent adult the student has a genuine relationship with
- ■ That adult checks in daily in a low-key, non-demanding way
- ■ The student's interests are known and referenced positively
- ■ The student knows they have a safe exit option if needed

Low-demand is not no-demand

A low-demand approach does not mean the student faces no expectations. It means demands are carefully considered, unnecessary pressure is removed, and the student's agency is respected. The goal is a classroom where the student's energy can go toward learning — not toward managing anxiety about demands.