

# Design for flexible use of space

A suggestion for implementing the strategy  
'Design for all from the outset' from the  
Guide: [ILEs](#)

- 
- Includes:**
- Design adaptable spaces
  - Enable student choice
  - Offer different learning spaces
  - Using larger spaces
  - Design outside spaces
  - Useful resources

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

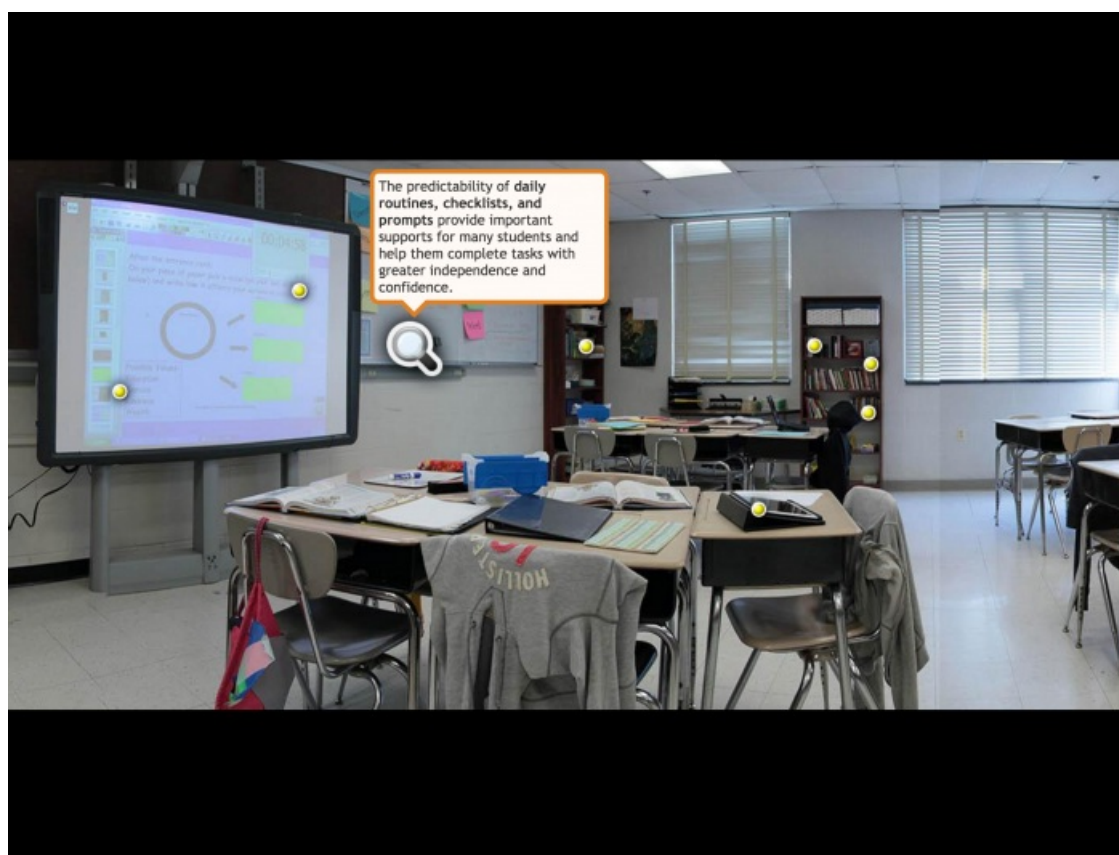
11 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Design adaptable spaces



[View full image \(2.4 MB\)](#)

## Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

11 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Enable student choice

Students at Halswell School describe how they use different spaces and why they choose to work in them.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/146585775>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Enabling e-Learning \(NZ\)](#)

<http://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Innovative-learning-environments/Year-3-4-learning-in-an-innovative-learning-environment>

## Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

11 July 2026

Link

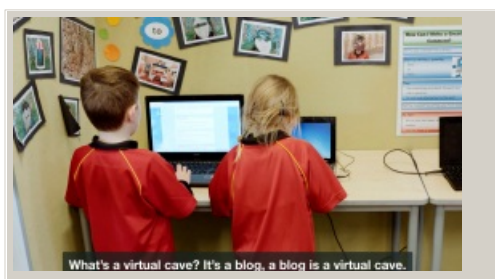
[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](http://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Offer different learning spaces

Steve Collis describes organising physical and virtual caves, watering holes, and campfires.

Students can then make considered choices to match their preferences and needs.



Video hosted on Vimeo <http://vimeo.com/158086569>

Closed Captions

Source:

[Enabling e-Learning \(NZ\)](#)

<https://elearning.tki.org.nz/Teaching/Innovative-learning-environments/Learning-spaces-Different-spaces-and-their-purposes>

## Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

11 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Using larger spaces

Larger, open learning spaces provide the flexibility to work in different groupings.

- ✓ Students can learn collectively and can easily come together in larger groups for activities such as kapa haka and waiata.
- ✓ Open learning spaces support tuakana-teina relationships between students and teachers.
- ✓ Students can work in separate spaces that are quiet and have low stimulus.
- ✓ Multiple groupings within open learning spaces support different teacher locations within the room and increase discursive teaching practice, which is linked to higher Māori student achievement.
- ✓ Orient spaces to receive good sunlight – natural light is linked to increased student achievement and Tamanui-te-rā (the sun) is important in the whakapapa of Māori culture.

[Inclusive Education](#)

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

11 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Design outside spaces

Create visual and tactile landmarks to support student orientation when working and moving in and around outdoor spaces.

In your design, consider:

- ✓ coloured or tactile pathways for moving between buildings
- ✓ sculptures or cultural artifacts to act as keys to locations and spatial mapping of areas
- ✓ safe spaces where students can seek support from a peer or an adult
- ✓ using clear, high contrasting signage to identify buildings
- ✓ naming and attaching visuals to buildings, so that students can easily identify spaces.

Inclusive Education

From

Guide: [Planning innovative learning environments \(ILEs\)](#)

Strategy: [Design for all from the outset](#)

Suggestion: [Design for flexible use of space](#)

Date

11 July 2026

Link

[inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space](https://inclusive.tki.org.nz/guides/planning-innovative-learning-environments-iles/design-for-flexible-use-of-space)

---

## Useful resources



## W.S.C. – Becoming a 'new' school

The design of flexible learning spaces is explored using case studies from Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, the UK, and the US.

Publisher: Western Springs College

[Visit website](#)



## Flexible Classroom Design: Student centred learning environments

Read time: 3 min

Flexible learning environments can inspire students and keep them motivated. This blog looks at why this is and how to adopt this model into your own classroom.

Publisher: Innovative Learning Environments & Teacher Change

[Visit website](#)



## The impact of physical design on student outcomes

Read time: 94 min

This report summarises research aimed at better understanding design features of learning spaces in the context of learning and achievement. Topics covered in this report include: lighting, heating, acoustics, indoor and outdoor spaces, and furniture considerations.

[Visit website](#)

This information was downloaded/printed from the Ministry of Education's website "Inclusive Education". Except where otherwise noted it is Crown Copyright 2018.

Information on the Inclusive Education website is regularly updated so we recommend you check the website version of this information to ensure it remains current.