

# Defensive Teaching Strategies

Keep the classroom door open if possible. Don't cover the window in the door.

Never be alone with a student. If you must speak to a child after class, keep it short and professional. Stay in view of the hall. Stand by the door. Have another teacher nearby.

Maintain your "personal space". Don't let students crowd around you or your desk.

Do not spend time with students outside of your professional responsibilities. Participate only in school board endorsed activities with students.

Maintain professional communication and relationships with students, parents and colleagues. Think carefully about what you say and write. Your words and gestures can be misinterpreted and held against you.

Do not share phone numbers, email addresses or personal websites with students.

Know the Board policies and procedures. Harassment, Equity etc. This includes the Transportation policy– do not take students in your car.

Be extremely cautious of touch. Parents, children and staff are all suspicious of strangers, and OT's are the "strangers" in the school. Respect their caution and use your own. Remember, the only safe place for your hands is in your pockets.

Call for assistance from the office before a situation gets out of control. Explain that you are concerned that the situation seems to be escalating and that you are being proactive in heading off problems.

Document anything that happens during the day which seems even slightly out of the ordinary. Keep your notations to the facts and write down the essential W's - who, what, when, where and that other W – witnesses. Keep a copy of your notes.

**Make these defensive strategies part of your daily routine.**