Classroom Calm Plan

One student's plan for calming down in class and rejoining it.

Student _____ Date _____

Filled in with (student, family and school team) _____

Fill this in with the student's family and the school team, and follow the student's IEP or behavior plan. If anyone is in danger, follow your school's emergency procedures.

1 Early signs we notice

What we see or hear when this student is starting to feel overwhelmed, from our notes. A few weeks of same-day notes help the team see patterns.

2 What helps before

The same activities at the same times; materials in the same places; changes, like an assembly, told at the start of the day or earlier; less clutter on the walls; some choice over seating and noise; a visual schedule the student has been taught to use.

3 The calm space and what's in it

Choose it with the student: where it is and what is there, such as alternative seating or noise-reducing headphones. It is never locked. It is offered, never forced: the student chooses whether to go. Visit it on calm days so the student knows it is somewhere to settle, not a punishment.

4 The words and visuals we use

A lower voice and very few words. The calm-down option the student already knows, such as a break card. Their communication device or board stays with them, with a low-tech backup. Give extra time to respond; don't answer for them.

5 What the adults do, and who does it

Stays with the student, gives space if they are safe	Who
Carries on with the rest of the class	Who
Keeps other students at a comfortable distance	Who
If anyone is in danger: follows the school's emergency procedures and calls for the help they name	Who

6 How the student rejoins the class

Quietly, without a lecture, at a point where they can succeed. Later, in a calm moment, practice how they ask for a break, spoken or not, and honor it when they use it.

7 What to note afterward

The same day: what happened right before, what it looked like, and what happened right after. Talk with the family and team if episodes happen often, are getting more intense, or anyone has been hurt.

Right before _____

What it looked like _____

Right after _____

Where we write it, and who on the team reads it _____

From the guide "How to help a student calm down in the classroom" on special-learning.com. Sources the guide uses: IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University, "Autism (Part 1): An Overview for Educators: The Learning Environment"; American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (2026), "Back-to-School: Tips for Supporting Students Who Use AAC Devices"; ASHA Practice Portal, "Augmentative and Alternative Communication."