

## Ten Tips for Creating a Staff/PPA Room Retreat

Thoughtful environmental improvements can enhance life for staff no end. Dr Jane Anderson, education consultant and researcher makes 10 practical suggestions below.

1. **Café society:** what do you like about your favourite café' or tearoom? Deconstruct what they are getting right and replicate the best bits around your staffroom
2. **Electromagnetic radiation (EMR)** emitted from electrical goods (causing stagnation and an unhealthy atmosphere) can be reduced with the use of fleshy, broad-leaved plants. Maintain these well as dead plants are worse than no plants
3. **Atmospheric lighting** will create sunshine, warmth and stave off SAD syndrome on overcast days, particularly when fitted with full spectrum daylight bulbs. Why not standard and table lamps with dimmers in the staffroom too instead of overhead lighting?
4. **Rubbish:** empty your bins on a daily basis – think fresh, clean and uplifted. Try not to keep bin the too close to you, move it out of your sightline
5. **Clutter:** create attractive and easily accessible storage and use it. Keep excess paper off your desk and tables – it's estimated that every piece of paper surrounding you can divert your attention up to 5 times a day. Multiply that by the number of things on your desk and tables and you have... a lot of wasted time and a problem focusing
6. **Nourishment:** surround yourselves with a plentiful supply of filtered water. Sip it as and when you *need* it throughout the day to stay alert and healthy
7. **Sound:** use music to correct or direct the mood according to staff work or rest needs
8. **Colour:** Make sure no one colour or texture dominates; reds and oranges stimulate, as do shiny and angled surfaces. Pale blue and green hues and soft surfaces induce calm and contemplation
9. **Contrast:** create 15 minutes of contrast to your day; open the window, adjust the lighting (both natural and artificial), stand up and walk around outside - outside the school grounds even; include appropriate (club?) armchairs for those moments when you need to think quietly, and a different work surface (eg a table or another desk) for a change of perspective
10. **Flow:** when finances allow, look at streamlining and coordinating the staff/PPA room furniture to create a more graceful outline to the room. Factor-in curves and fluidity of design for ease of movement. Create a supportive friend in your staffroom ☺

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