



Escalation Snapshot Cards

A quick classroom discussion tool for helping students spot escalation early

Use these cards to help students recognise the early moments when a situation is starting to heat up. The focus is not who is right or wrong. The focus is what is happening, what is making it worse, and what safer choice could happen next.



Best for

Health, Pastoral Care,
Homeroom, Wellbeing,
or post-incident
reflection



Year levels

Years 7–12



Time

5–10 minutes



Use when

You want a quick, safe
way to explore how
conflict builds before
it turns into harm

How to Use

Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose one card. 2. Read it aloud. 3. Ask the three discussion questions. 4. Keep the conversation general and future focused.
Teacher prompts if discussion stalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What is the first sign this is no longer just talk? ▶ What role is the audience playing here? ▶ What would make this worse in the next 2 minutes? ▶ What is one move that could slow it down early?
Keep it safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ No names. ▶ No replaying real incidents. ▶ No pressure to disclose personal experiences. ▶ Students can pass. ▶ Follow your school's wellbeing and behaviour support processes if a student becomes distressed.
Close with	<p>The strongest move is often the one that slows things down before harm happens.</p>

Printable Cards



Group chat screenshot

A student sees screenshots from a private chat being shared around. They feel humiliated, their friends start hyping them up, and by lunch they are ready to confront someone in front of everyone.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?



Sports game shove

During a sports game, a hard bump gets called unfair. One player shoves back, voices rise, and friends from both teams start moving closer.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?



Corridor stare-down

Two students bump shoulders in a crowded corridor. One says, "Watch where you're going". The other turns around, and a crowd starts gathering.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?



Rumour after class

A rumour about a relationship starts spreading after class. One student feels embarrassed and wants to 'set the record straight' publicly before the end of the day.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?



Party post

Photos from a weekend party are shared online with mocking comments. Someone feels singled out and starts messaging that they will deal with it at school tomorrow.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?



Bus stop audience

A disagreement that started at school continues at the bus stop. More people arrive, phones come out, and the mood shifts from talking to performing.

- ▶ What is happening here?
- ▶ What is making this more likely to escalate?
- ▶ What could someone do next to reduce harm?