How Classwize Rules Work

With Classwize Rules you can give your students access to sites, apps, and online content that your school's internet filter normally blocks, or block things that your school normally allows.

To effectively use Rules, you need to understand four key ideas:

1. Signatures

2. Locking, Blocking and Allowing

3. Global Rules and Class Rules

4. Rule Order

What is a Signature?

You may think of your school's internet filter as something that blocks and allows specific web addresses, but the truth is a bit more complex than that. It actually blocks and allows Signatures. Signatures can contain websites, applications, games, search keywords, IP addresses, ports and groups of websites.

These are the types of Signatures you're most likely to see when managing your class:

- Website signatures

- Group signatures

- Category signatures

- Game signatures

Website Signatures

In Classwize, Website Signatures usually refer to domains and subdomains, not individual URLs (links).
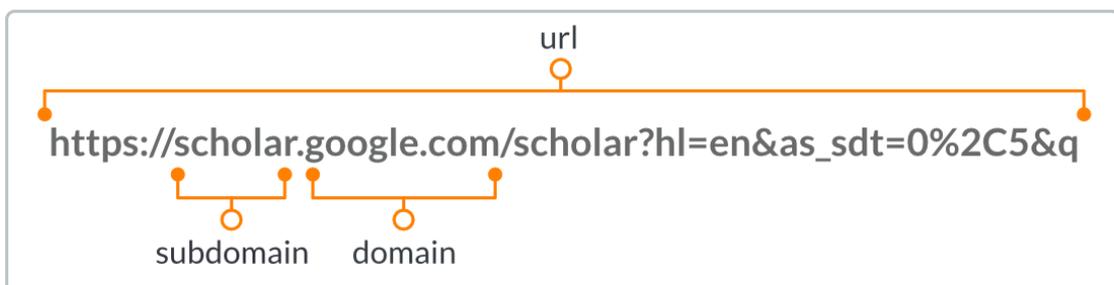
This means that if you make a rule using a Website Signature, it will apply to all of the individual pages in that website.

For example, setting an Allow rule for the Google Signature will let the students access images.google.com,

docs.google.com, drive.google.com and similar pages. Blocking the Google Website Signature will stop students from accessing any Google page.

Why don't Rules apply to individual URLs?

We don't usually have Signatures that are URLs because we can't always see and filter full URLs before the page reaches the student.

Group Signatures

Most websites need other websites in order to work properly. Usually with very popular websites, we'll create one Signature that includes both the website and all of the other websites it needs to work. We call these Group Signatures. Group Signatures let you create an Allow rule on a site without worrying that some of its components will not work.

For example, if you Allow Khan Academy but Block YouTube content, Khan Academy won't work properly for your students. Because of this we include YouTube in the Khan Academy Group Signature, so that videos will still load if you Allow Khan Academy but forget to Allow YouTube.
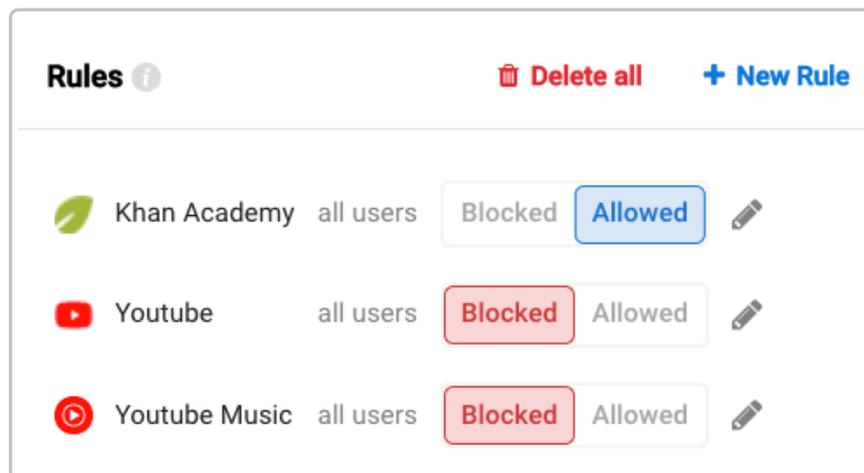
In this example, Khan Academy is allowed and will show Youtube videos.

Category Signatures

The internet is enormous, and we can't expect you or your school's IT team to set a rule for every website and service. Instead, we classify each website into one or more Categories and let you create rules that apply to every single website in that Category.

For example, websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Twitch all belong in the Social Media category. By blocking (or allowing) access to Social Media, you can manage your students' access to all sites and apps that belong in this category.

Parent and Child Categories

Categories can also contain other categories. These are called Parent and Child categories. For example, a very broad parent category called Entertainment contains several child categories:Animation and Manga, Celebrities

and Entertainment, Music and Audio, Sports, and Streaming Media. Each of these child categories also contain Signatures.

You can set rules on Parent and Child categories, as well as individual Signatures. This gives you and your school a lot of flexibility in how you make and apply rules. You can create a rule that applies to the parent category, and then create exceptions to that rule by applying a different rule to a child category or an individual signature.

Game Signatures

We're not saying it's hard to stop kids from playing Among Us, but… it's hard to stop kids from playing Among Us. Or Fortnite, or Roblox or whatever other game is the current flavor of the month. There are often multiple ways to access these games, and so we create specialized Game Signatures that let you Block—or Allow— those games everywhere they can be played.

> **Using Classwize's Reporting Tools helps you create better Rules**
>
> Students are very resourceful, especially with game unblockers. If you think you have students who are using a game unblocker, you can use our Screenshot History feature to save the screenshots and URLs of these unblockers and forward them to your school's IT support.

Global Rules and Class Rules

What is a Global Rule?

Your school or district maintains a central set of filtering rules in a separate tool called School Manager. We call rules in this central set Global Rules, and Global Rules always apply unless you create rules for your classes or students in Classwize.

There are four types of Global Rules:

Global Rule	Description
Locked Allowed	The Signature is Allowed and can always be accessed, even if another Global Rule or Class Rule is set to Block. These signatures cannot be blocked in Classwize.
Locked Blocked	The Signature is Blocked and can't be accessed, even if another Global Rule or Class Rule is set to Allow. These signatures cannot be allowed in Classwize.
Allowed	Your school normally lets students access this signature. Teachers can create rules to block this in Classwize.
Blocked	Your school doesn't normally let students access this signature. Teachers can create rules to allow this in Classwize.

What is a Class Rule?

Classwize lets you make Class Rules that override Global Rules on a class-by-class or student-by-student basis. There are two types of Class Rules:

| Global Rule	Description
Blocked	Your student can't access this Signature, whether or not your school normally allows it with a Global Rule (except Locked Allow rules).
Allowed	Your student can access this Signature, even if your school normally blocks with a Global Rule (except Locked Block rules).

Adding Rules in Blocked Rules Only Mode

If you can only add Block Rules in Classwize, your school may have enabled Block Rules Only Mode. This feature disables Allow rules in Classwize and only lets you create Block Rules. If you still need to create Allowed rules for your Classwize classes or students, contact your school's IT support.

See Creating Rules in Block Rules Only Mode for more information.

Rule Order

When a student tries to open a website, Classwize asks a series of questions to decide if the student should or should not have access to it. It asks the same questions in the same order every time, and it stops asking questions as soon as it gets a Yes.
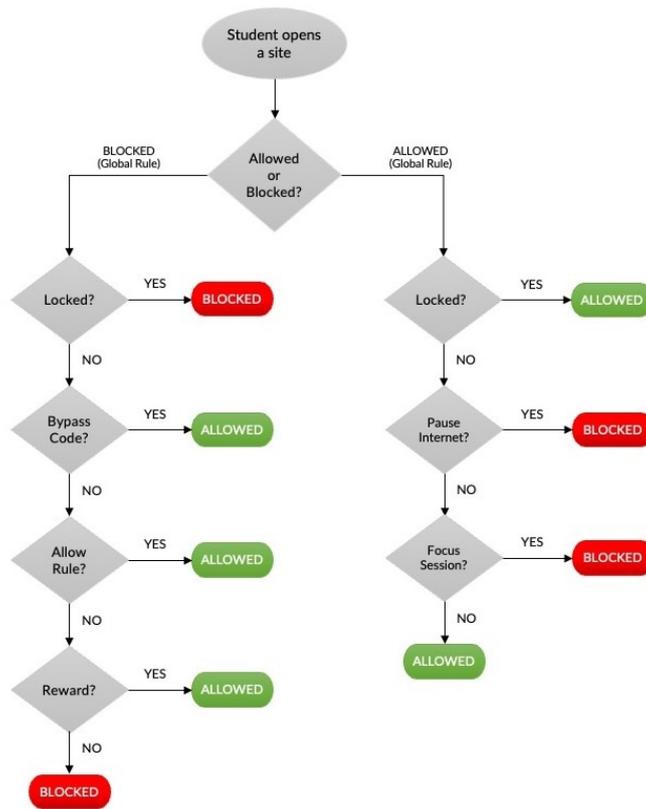
> **The default setting is** *Allowed*
>
> The default setting is to allow access. If your school has no Global Rule which blocks a site or content, then your students can access it.

Question 1: Is it Locked?

Classwize will ask the Global Rules if the site is in a Locked Signature. If the answer is yes, it enforces the Lock. The Lock always wins, no matter what other rules might apply, so a site in a Locked Blocked Signature is always blocked and a site in a Locked Allowed Signature is always allowed.

If the answer is no, Classwize moves onto the next question.

Question 2: Is there a Bypass code?

The second check made by the Classwize is to see if the student is using a Bypass code. If the answer is yes they can access the site, unless the site is also in a Locked Blocked Signature. A Bypass code won't beat a Locked Blocked Signature, but it will beat any other Block Rule.

If the answer is no, Classwize moves onto the next question.

Question 3: Is the internet Paused?

The third check made by Classwize is to see if you have enabled a Pause Internet for the student or the class that they're in. If the answer is yes, the student can't access any sites that aren't Locked Allowed without a Bypass code.

If the answer is no, Classwize moves onto the next question.

Question 4: Is there an active Focus site?

If the answer is yes, Classwize checks to see if the site the student wants to access is the Focus site. If it is the Focus site, the student can access it. If it is not the Focus site, the site is blocked.

If the answer is no, Classwize moves onto the next question.

Question 5: Is there an Allow or a Reward Classwize Rule?

If Classwize hasn't found any special Locked, Bypass, Focus or Pause rules, it checks to see if there's an Allow or Reward Classwize Rule. If there is, the student can access the site.

If the answer is no, Classwize moves onto the next question.

Question 6: Is there a Classwize Block Rule or Global Block Rule?

Finally, Classwize asks if there are any other Block rules. If the answer is yes, the site is blocked. If the answer is no, the site is allowed.

Troubleshooting and Frequently Asked Questions

See Classwize Rules FAQ.