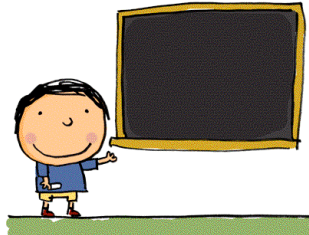


SURVIVAL TIPS FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS



ORGANIZE YOURSELF

Find the location of essential rooms other than your assigned classroom: the main office, restrooms, nurse's office, library, gym, multipurpose (lecture) room, and cafeteria.

Take along a book or magazine that has stories that are suitable to read to primary and intermediate students.

Dress in versatile clothing in case you have extra duties such as outdoor recess or bus dismissal.

Collect ideas that can supplement the classroom teacher's lesson plans with well-planned, interesting games and activities.



USE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Be at school early to acquaint yourself with classroom procedures, lesson plans, and students.

Be ready to begin an activity as soon as the students arrive.

Greet students at the door.

Be aware of student's signs of restlessness, frustration, or boredom. Be willing to change activities and plans when students have reached their saturation points.

Be flexible in following the classroom teacher's lesson plans. Some teachers write extensive plans to make sure there's plenty to do. If a 40 minute plan is lasting longer than appropriate, end the lesson and leave an explanatory note to the teacher.

Be firm in following the established rules of the classroom. Let students know which behavior patterns you find acceptable and which ones are unacceptable. Remember that disciplinary techniques differ for elementary and secondary students.

Be consistent in disciplining students so they will learn what type of behavior you expect.

Be in control and maintain control. Try the following techniques:

Wait for student attention and inform the students that you are waiting.

Vary the tone and volume of your voice, but remember that quiet, firm tones achieve more than shouting.

Use gestures, such as fingers to lips, to give messages.

Discipline only the students who demonstrate inappropriate behavior. Undeserved blanket punishments generate animosity.

Ignore minor misbehavior if you think it is only an attention-seeking device.

Take action when a student's behavior may be injurious to that student or to others. Don't hesitate to enlist the help of another teacher or administrator if you need assistance in halting a disturbance.

Reinforce and reward good behavior.



BE PREPARED

One of your main responsibilities is keeping control of the classroom. On some days it will feel like your only duty. Since keeping control of the class is tough enough for the best substitutes, you need every advantage that you can get. Students will attempt to get at you in every way possible: if you leave a window of opportunity open to students, they will take advantage of it. Before you step into a classroom, you must prepare yourself. The way you dress, the way you speak, and your knowledge of the class subject are factors that you should consider before stepping into the classroom.

TRAIN YOUR VOICE

Your voice is very important to your role as a substitute teacher. The first 10 words out of your mouth will determine how the rest of the class is run. Before you step foot in a classroom, decide how you want your class to see you and practice being this person. "This person" can be a "demanding" person, a "jovial" person, and "understanding" person, or any other type of person.

DRESS WELL

You need to be as professional as possible. The students will point out what is not professional with your appearance. Students target substitute teachers for practical jokes and compromising situations. Sloppy dressing makes you an easy target for these jokes.

KNOW SUBJECTS AS WELL AS POSSIBLE

While it is impossible to know everything about all subjects, in most cases it is possible to get into the classroom early and look through the textbook. Get to know assignments, terms, ideas and even some of the answers. Use the teacher's manual. Some teacher's manuals have "Key Points", "Discussion Topics", and "Answers to Questions" in the book's margins. A substitute has to learn to use these margin notes to their advantage. Another option is to wait for the first student to enter the classroom and to ask this student about the subject being taught.

KNOW SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Know when the Pledge of Allegiance is said, when to read the School Bulletin, and the difference between an earthquake alarm and a fire alarm. Know the school's discipline procedures and other procedures specific to each school. This information is many times contained in a folder given to each substitute teacher upon arrival at the school. If no folder is given to you as a substitute, this does not relieve you of your responsibility to know school procedures. If time permits, ask a neighboring teacher for information regarding school procedures.

MAKE YOUR OWN HALL PASS

Make a pass with your name on it and take it to every class where you teach. If you must stop class to write a pass, it is a hindrance on the steady flow of a classroom. A suggestion for your pass is to put them on cardboard, or heavy form of paper. They can be computer generated, or handwritten one minute before class begins. Make sure you get the pass back from students who use them, and always have a spare pass.

HAVE A BACKUP PLAN

Use your backup teaching plan when the absent teacher doesn't leave a set of lesson plans for the day. Backup plans should be kept in files in your car: the substitute teacher should have at least one activity for an English class, at least one activity for math, etc. Every substitute teacher should plan on days when they know nothing about the subject for the class they are teaching and no lesson plans were left for you. In such a case, the substitute teacher needs alternative activities.



BEFORE CLASS BEGINS

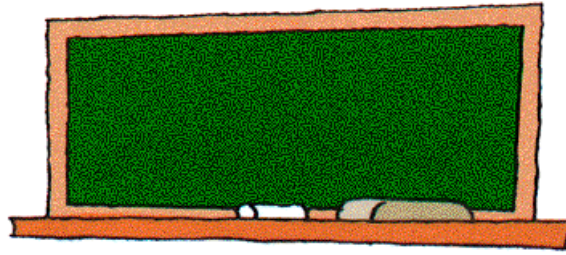
Proper preparation for substitute teaching is critical. Your arrival time at the school can be essential to smooth functioning of your classroom. Taking the correct supplies into the classroom can mean an extra 5 minutes added to your teaching opportunity because you don't need to spend that time looking for needed essential teaching supplies.

ALWAYS HAVE A #2 PENCIL AND A BLACK PEN

These are the essential supplies. Use the #2 pencil for taking notes about the lessons and the black pen for marking attendance. Don't count on these being in the classroom when you arrive. The absent teacher may have taken them home, put them in a "special place" so that no one, including you, will be able to find them, or they might be kept in the desk - which is locked.

BE EARLY

Be at the targeted school at least 1/2 hour earlier than you were asked to be. There are many duties that must be accomplished before you start your first class. These duties might include finding the school, finding the parking lot, finding a parking space, filling a "duty" role if that position has been given to you, finding the room where you are to teach, finding the roll sheets, finding lesson plans, reviewing the material you are to teach, learning school procedures, and planning your own teaching strategy for the class that you will be teaching today.



DURING CLASS

The classroom is the place where the substitute can blossom. Your very personality is put on display in front of students. The teaching methods are up to you, and sometimes the teaching plans are also of your choice. These are some basic classroom suggestions and general rules that experienced substitute teachers have learned that will help improve the classroom flow. By using these suggestions as guidelines, a substitute teacher improves the chances of being asked back to substitute teach again.

WHAT GOES ON BEHIND YOUR BACK IS AS IMPORTANT AS WHAT GOES ON UNDER YOUR NOSE

A substitute teacher should always be aware of what is happening with the activities of their students. This includes foreground activities, background activities, and activities not directly under your control, but still under your responsibility. You may want to devote time to "watching" the student who left class to go to the nurse in addition to the students in the classroom.

YOU WILL HAVE GOOD DAYS AND YOU WILL HAVE BAD DAYS

The same class that was so well-mannered and polite yesterday can be obnoxious and impolite the next day. And, of course, there will be days when you will feel obnoxious and impolite, too. Despite these changes, you must exhibit the same behavior and conduct that you have in the past. The life of a student is unstable and ever-changing: the students don't need a teacher who is the same.

TALK TO INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS BEFORE TALKING TO THE CLASS

There is always one student who wanders into class long before anyone else does. Speaking with this student is the best insurance a substitute can have and it is free for the taking. The two minutes that you spend speaking to this student can forewarn you of any problems that need to be dealt with. This student may

tell of one trick that students repeatedly play on substitutes, or of an assembly during third period that nobody has told you about, or how Joshua has epileptic seizures, but that the students know how to deal with the seizure.

NEVER LET THE STUDENTS SEE YOU SWEAT

Sweating can take on many forms: stuttering, looking off in the distance, staring, frantically searching for a piece of chalk, or the most blatant form of sweating - responding "I don't know" to a question asked by a student. Sweating is the sign of a person who has no control of the situation. If you show signs of this, students will see it and use it to their advantage.

DON'T SMILE UNTIL YOU ARE IN CONTROL

Smiling can often be mistaken by students as "sweating". Avoid this confusion by not smiling until the students are doing what they should be doing, and you are in control of the classroom.

ESTABLISH ACCEPTABLE NOISE LEVEL

You have been given control of the classroom. The class will challenge this control and your first "standard" that students learn will be your noise level. Making your acceptable noise level known can take many forms. The first student in the class room will often be able to tell you the most effective form of discipline for the class. Use this to quiet the students when the noise level is too loud. Be sure to repeat this quieting procedure each time you deem it necessary.

ASK STUDENTS, "WHAT DO YOU THINK?" WHEN YOU DON'T KNOW

This not only allows you to get away with not knowing the material, but encourages the students towards finding the answer on their own. Students are quick to "test" substitute teachers to see if they are qualified to teach the classroom subject. The best response to the students' challenge is to ask, "What do you think?" If they persist, instruct the student to "Look for the answer in the book," or "Go on to the next question."

GIVE THEM EVERY REASON TO INVITE YOU BACK TO TEACH AGAIN

"Them" are the absent teacher, the sub-caller, the administrators, and the students. If "them" have trouble with you, it may decrease your chances of being asked back.

BE PROFESSIONAL

The students expect a substitute teacher to be professional. This means dressing, talking, and acting professionally. This rules out dressing in blue jeans and tee-shirt.

FOLLOW SCHOOL RULES

Different schools have different rules. It is your duty to know the different rules of each school. Know if eating in class is okay and learn the location where the class goes in case of a fire drill (for every class you teach).

BE FLEXIBLE

Being a substitute teacher and being flexible are one of the same. You must be willing to teach a boy's P.E. class, even though the sub-caller called you in to substitute for an advanced trigonometry class. If the sub is not flexible, the school may have a hard time effectively utilizing the talents of this substitute teacher.

THERE ARE NO KIDS IN YOUR CLASS, ONLY STUDENTS

The students in your class will be what ever you want them to be. If you call them "kids", they will act like kids. If you call them "students", they will act much more mature.

TREAT STUDENTS WITH RESPECT

Treat students with respect. The popular saying "Contempt Breeds Contempt" also works the other way; "Respect Breeds Respect". This includes giving praise for student's work and allowing all students to participate.

HAVE STUDENTS DO SOMETHING

A plan is very important! Having no plan is, in fact, giving students free reign of the class room, and this is never a good idea for a substitute teacher. For each class, an assignment should be written on the chalkboard. Tell students to work silently, and to complete the work in a given time limit. This assignment can be anything: handouts you brought with you, extra work not originally assigned, or other work that you find in the classroom. Having students do something will give you a chance to take roll, get organized, and what ever else needs to be done.

WALK AROUND CLASS

You are in charge. Pay attention to what is going on. Be aware of any actions that may call for your intervention. Walking around class reminds will allow you to speak to the students for both control and social purposes.

KEEP POINTED IN THE SAME DIRECTION

Continually pointing in the same direction will be appreciated by students, faculty, and teachers alike. After tripping during a student test, the classroom will laugh. Your redemption is to quietly shush the students and remind them that they are to be quiet during a test. This is your objective, stick to it. If your objective is to teach students how to conjugate Spanish verbs, do this. Keep pointed towards the same goal all during class.

PLANT A SEED

You are growing things at the school where you are substituting. You are planting seeds of knowledge in the minds of students when you teach the subject that you majored in college. You are planting seeds of respectability in the minds of struggling students when you say they did a good job in class. You are planting seeds of goodwill when you help carry books for the girl on crutches. You are planting seeds of objectivity when you point out new ways of looking at situations to students.

