

## ✪ *What is expected?*

One principal has set out the following expectations of supply teachers

Supply Teachers need to be:

- ★ Well organised and have work ready for the day
- ★ Willing and happy to teach the class that is allocated to them
- ★ Ready to undertake any tasks that are expected of them during the day
- ★ Able to keep the students working productively throughout the day and not just filling in time
- ★ Firm, positive, flexible and caring
- ★ Able to ask for help when necessary

## ✪ *What should I do when I arrive at the school for the supply teaching experience?*

- ★ Go to administration/deputy head's office and introduce yourself.
- ★ Ask where to find the classroom(s) you'll be teaching in
- ★ Ask if any work has been left. If there has, find out who you should speak to about it. (Make sure this work is completed)
- ★ In a Secondary school, if there is no work left, find out if you can use a textbook (if appropriate) and if the Head of Department or any of the teachers know what unit the class is working on. Remember that your colleagues have their own issues before the start of school and may not be able to assist in an extensive way
- ★ Ask the Administration/Deputy Head the routine for the day and obtain details such as timetable, special lessons, medication and teachers' notes if available.
- ★ If you have time, ask if there are any children in the class about whom you should know- children with learning problems, children who are anxious, who may be upset by the absence of the regular teacher, or children who pose behaviour management problems
- ★ Introduce yourself to peers in neighbouring classrooms before the start of school or at the first break
- ★ If you are on playground duty, ask where in the school that will be and at what time
- ★ If you are not on playground duty, go to the staffroom and introduce yourself. Everyone will be busy trying to get the most of a short break - you'll need to be proactive! It's not rudeness, it's timing!
- ★ Leave the teacher a note to tell him/her what you have done. They appreciate it and may request you in the future
- ★ Introduce yourself to the children in primary school, write your name on the board and tell them how you would like to be addressed- Mrs-, Mr-, Sir, Miss, etc.
- ★ Be clear on the pronunciation of your name- you may prefer to be Mr K or Mrs. P etc
- ★ Tell the children what your expectations are in terms of work and behaviour and also let them know that you are looking forward to spending the day with them - let them know there will be time for fun too! Plan for fun!
- ★ Be seen to be enjoying yourself, to be on "top of things".
- ★ Many supply teachers have moved on to contract positions and eventually permanent employment

## 🌀 *How do I have a successful supply teaching experience?*

### ☆ **Keep it interesting**

- ★ Provide appropriate and interesting curriculum work for the level you are teaching
- ★ Use stories from your own background and country to incorporate into your teaching
- ★ Have a broad understanding of basic mathematics throughout each level of the school
- ★ Have suitable problem solving mathematics activities ready for each level
- ★ Have suitable problem solving language activities ready for each level

### ☆ **Make yourself part of the scene**

- ★ Move around the room
- ★ Show interest in the students' work
- ★ Be confident
- ★ Refer to the regular teacher to show that you are continuing where they left off
- ★ Make positive comments on students' work
- ★ Give praise if students are on task, ask if they need assistance if not on task

### ☆ **Be a good classroom manager**

- ★ Don't expect the regular classroom teacher to follow-up your discipline measures
- ★ Ascertain who needs help and make sure they get help
- ★ Watch noise levels- keep children actively involved in purposeful activity
- ★ Have activities ready for children who finish work early

## 🌀 *What about classroom management?*

Regular classroom teachers often find that behaviour management is one of the most challenging aspects of teaching. How much more difficult can it be then for teachers who are unfamiliar with the school or the class, and who often will only be spending a day or two with the particular group of students. It is good to be generally prepared prior to your supply teaching experience and to have thought out your own strategies for classroom management. (The best "strategy" is probably, however, to have a stock of interesting lessons, and activities, a positive attitude and a deal of confidence)

## 🌀 *Nevertheless, before you begin teaching for the day, it may be a good idea to do the following:*

- ★ Obtain a copy of the school's Behaviour Management Policy or ask the Headteacher or staff about the school's policy in this area. Check on the main points of this policy so that your actions are in line with it. What happens for a first offence? What happens next? You need to ensure that what you do is consistent with the school approach
- ★ Find out the names of 3 or 4 "good" students and the names of any possible "troublemakers"
- ★ Also find out what your "out of classroom" options are in terms of classroom management. For example, is the Responsible Thinking Process in place in this school? Which offences are considered serious enough to involve Administration such as Deputy Heads
- ★ What other specialist people could you call on if you need support? For example, do the Year Coordinators play a management role? Is there a Behaviour Management HOD in the school, or do they have a withdrawal system for serious offenders and which teachers would be prepared to support you in terms of management?

## ✪ *In class:*

- ★ Concentrate on getting the good students working before you deal with misbehaviours
- ★ Adopt a calm, non-confrontationist approach but be prepared to be assertive
- ★ Establish yourself and your expectations quickly and clearly. Remember, the children may see the arrival of the supply teacher as the start of a one-day holiday
- ★ Use the name of the regular teacher as this establishes a link with you as part of the teaching team at the school
- ★ Assume that off-task behaviour is related to an inability to complete the task until you know otherwise, so offer help or organise another student to help the target student.
- ★ If you have trouble with a difficult child, you should first try to work through the classroom behaviour management policy with its rules and consequences or use your own strategies that you have found useful in the past. If this fails, contact the administration for help or send another child to the office with a message
- ★ Don't ask a student his/her name as this is an invitation to play the "let's torture the supply teacher" game. There are other ways of getting this information
- ★ Your most powerful management tool is positive reinforcement, but make sure you are positively reinforcing positive behaviours. For example, standing a class outside a classroom while you wait for silence can be counter productive as they may quite happy to stand out there indefinitely so long as they don't have to do any work
- ★ Assume when you have given an instruction that it will be carried out. Do not stand in the front of a student waiting for him/her to comply, as this is setting up a confrontation situation
- ★ If a confrontation situation arises, do not defend your lesson plan, your personal attributes, or your classroom actions in front of the whole class. This is a favourite time-wasting game of some "tough" students and is better dealt with in private; either in the front of the classroom or outside the classroom providing you can maintain supervision of the class to fulfil duty of care.
- ★ Keep a little notebook and use it to record information to make your job easier next time you come in contact with that class. For example, student names, strategies that worked and those that didn't and memorable incidents that you would like to repeat or not have repeated.
- ★ A note to thank the teacher for leaving work is always appreciated and helps you to develop a team approach to the teaching and learning process.
- ★ Try not to take derogatory comments made by some adolescents too seriously, it is part of the approach to new situations of some adolescents to focus on a personal attribute, make fun of it, and see how you react
- ★ Most challenges to your authority are best handled by you and handled in the least intrusive fashion. The more you have to depend on other staff, the harder it will be to establish yourself as a serious force with students. **Respect has to be earned, but treating students with respect is the first step.** Despite all this, some situations will need the intervention of others and it is best to recognise this
- ★ Let the students know that you trust them and that if everyone follows the rules, it be will a good day