

Substitute Handbook

Substitute Teachers are crucial to Brevard Public Schools!

Your work plays a vital role in maintaining continuity of instruction and promoting a positive learning environment.

This handbook is designed to help you be a successful and effective Substitute Teacher.

Brevard Public Schools expects Substitute Teachers to be professional and prepared, to maintain confidentiality, and to support the BPS mission "To Serve Every Student with Excellence as the Standard".



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DRESS AND GROOMING

Substitute Teachers are expected to dress professionally and appropriately. Please exercise good judgment in physical appearance, clothing, and hygiene.

- Jeans, sweatpants, and/or shorts should only be worn for special activities as directed by the school administration.
- Shirts or blouses that reveal the midriff or chest should NEVER be worn.
- Hats/caps are not appropriate to wear inside schools.
- Clothing that promotes alcohol, drugs, tobacco; contains obscene or suggestive language; or any type of message that may cause disruption should NEVER be worn.
- Casual Fridays are at the discretion of the school administration.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL

After you secure an assignment in RedRover, you might receive class and school specific instructions. If you are unfamiliar with our schools, a member of the school administration will accompany you to the classroom and briefly help you get oriented. Neighboring teachers will be glad to help you. Please don't hesitate to ask for help!

Fire and/or tornado drills may occur at any time. Please understand your classroom procedures in advance. The school administration should acquaint each new Substitute with a building map, school schedule, and any other necessary information.

Please be considerate when accepting and canceling assignments. If you have picked up an assignment well in advance and then drop it last minute for a different assignment, it causes a hardship on the first school who now has no coverage.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Personal calls are not allowed while students are in your care. Personal phones must be turned off during instructional time. We recognize that emergencies do happen. If you need to make a personal call, please get permission from the school administration.

No personal items may be used during class time. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Tablets, laptops, and phones
- Personal reading material
- Personal hobby items

Remember, you are here for the students. Use of a personal device during class time may lead to exclusion from a school.

In the case of accident or injury, use common sense. Attend to the students involved and alert the school administration as quickly as possible. If a student becomes ill, please do not send them to the office alone. Either send a reliable classmate as an escort or secure help from another staff member.

Remember; Substitute Teachers do NOT have a planning period. You may be asked to temporarily cover another class or do some other duty during the regular teacher's planning period.

BEFORE YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT

One of the most significant things you can do to ensure a successful teaching experience is to plan ahead and develop your own substitute routine. Your preparedness will allow you to be organized, relaxed, and set the tone for the day. Plan how you will manage the following:

- Attendance
- Tardy students
- Missing supplies
- Handing out materials
- Non-compliant students
- Collecting and labeling student work
- Ending class

WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE SCHOOL

Report directly to the main office upon arrival to sign in. You may have received some individualized info via RedRover or email, but the school administration will have additional information for you. Make note of the main office phone extension and keep it with you for quick reference.

WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Locate the lesson plans and attendance record. If lesson plans are not available, let the school administrator know and create your own if needed. Rely on your experiences, ideas from other teachers or aides, and materials in the classroom to facilitate planning.

Familiarize yourself with the classroom. Locate the supplies needed for the day and the nearest restrooms. If possible, introduce yourself to the neighboring teachers.

WHILE YOU ARE TEACHING

As a Substitute Teacher, you are expected to follow the lessons plans to the best of your ability and to accommodate any special learning requirements outlined.

Begin class on time and work to establish rapport with the students. Introduce yourself and explain that you are substituting for the day. Be sure your directions are clear by checking for understanding. Always treat students with respect and courtesy. **Never leave students unattended.**

BEFORE YOU LEAVE

Secure the classroom by turning off lights and equipment and locking the doors. Check out through the main office before you leave for the day. You will need to return any keys and sign out.

EXCLUSION FROM SCHOOLS

A school principal may exclude a Substitute Teacher from their school for any reason. If you are excluded from three (3) BPS schools, you will no longer be eligible to substitute teach with the district.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE

Students are familiar with the discipline plans left by their teacher, please follow them. Follow these tips from educational experts:

- **Use a positive approach** – Start with positive correction. Be direct with your request for positive behavior; a direct request to appropriately behave is better than a negative request to stop misbehavior. Use a soft, firm voice and make eye contact to help convey your message.
- **Give the student time to comply** – After you make a clear request for positive behavior, give the student a moment to comply. Maintain eye contact and restate the request calmly if necessary.
- **Don't take it personally** – Stay emotionally detached and remain professional. Negative behaviors are often a response to a situation, not the instructor.
- **Exercise self-control** – Do not allow a classroom situation to make you extremely angry. Ask for assistance before it gets to that point.
- **Treat all students with respect** – Avoid discussions that contain personal qualities, decisions, opinions, judgements, or controversial topics.
- **Use common sense** – Any behavior that may be considered threatening, intimidating, or making someone feel unsafe or uncomfortable is considered harassment. Avoid behaviors that impede a student's movements or prevent a student from moving freely. Protect yourself by not putting your hands on a child.

If a student becomes non-compliant, try these techniques to prevent the situation from escalating:

- **Proximity** – Standing near a disruptive student, while continuing to instruct, will often change behavior.
- **Relocating a student** – Use classroom management techniques that allow students to stay in the learning environment. Moving a student to another seat may prove disruptive and challenging and should only be done if other techniques have failed. Office referrals are a last resort. Do your research and stay abreast of current classroom management best practices.
- **Never threaten, intimidate, or issue ultimatums** – Stick to the rules and be fair and consistent. Use a calm approach free of emotion or sarcasm. Reinforce the idea of consequences when a student makes the choice to misbehave.

If a student remains non-compliant after trying all the above techniques, implement the school's discipline procedures. Always consult the school administrator for major discipline issues, including when safety is compromised.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below can help you avoid many common mistakes made by Substitute Teachers:

- NEVER use corporal punishment.
- Discriminatory comments regarding race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry, disability, medical condition, veteran status, or any other protected status defined by law will not be tolerated.
- You are the student's teacher, not their friend. Smile and be polite but avoid being too friendly. Be firm in your expectations and follow through with your consequences. Praise the behaviors that you want and model politeness towards all students.
- Do not bribe with food. Students may have unknown allergies. You may offer small incentives for good behavior, such as 10 minutes free time at the end of class.
- Remain flexible and be willing to change assignments if necessary to accommodate student needs. If you have concerns regarding a request made by a school administrator, contact the Substitute Coordinator after the assignment is complete.
- Report all accidents or unusual incidents involving students to administration immediately.
- Yelling at students conveys a message of desperation. Yelling also escalates classroom noise, rather than decreasing it. Use alternative methods to regain control of the class.
- Actively supervise students at all times.
- Keep students on task by walking around the room and actively engaging with the class. Provide guidance and reinforcement as needed.
- Always use professional language. NEVER use profanity around students. Do not make comments about the quality of a teacher or their lesson plans to students.
- Understand that students are often aware of and affected by current events. Be tactful and respectful.
- Any videos shown must be pre-approved by the school administration.
- Do not call staff members at home unless given permission by the staff member.
- If you have concerns regarding student belongings, contact the school administrator. Do not look through backpacks or other student property.
- Do not use the school computers unless instructed to do so in the lesson plans.
- All students must check out through the office.
- Do not take any photographs or videos without the permission of the school administrator.
- Do not refuse a student's request to go to the nurse or the restroom.
- Students are not required to recite or stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. However, you may require respectful silence.
- Do not use religious materials (i.e. Christmas or Easter printouts).
- Do not detain students after class.

LEGAL ISSUES

Substitute Teachers are “guest” teachers and are subject to all federal, state, and local laws pertaining to teachers. Substitutes are expected to abide by the Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida and all BPS Board policies and procedures. Please visit the links below for more information:

[Principles of Professional Conduct for the Education Profession in Florida](#)

[BPS Board Policies and Procedures](#)

This Substitute Handbook is provided as a guide and is not to be considered a contract. The School District reserves the right to make changes to the policies, procedures, and other statements made in this Substitute Handbook. Business conditions, federal and state law, and organizational needs change periodically; such changes may require portions of the Handbook be revised. This is necessary to successfully provide the appropriate employment relationship and to obtain the goals of the organization. Substitutes are encouraged to contact Human Resources with any questions.