



GREENBUSH
THE EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

Top 10 Success Strategies for Substitute Teachers

1. Arrive Early to Meet Key Contacts, Review Plans, and Prepare the Room

- Opening of school each day (usually 30 minutes before classes start)
- Front Office Staff and Principal - Meet and greet (special instructions, keys, etc)
- Review plans left by teacher several times (clarification, expectations, special instructions, etc.)
- Do you have access to all of the resources?
 - Copies of handouts
 - Access to technology (computer, dvd player, etc.)
 - Textbook
 - Rosters
- Ask clarifying questions (nearby teacher, front office staff)
- Arriving early will set the tone for accomplishing other important tasks: Emergency Procedures, Student Rosters, Relationships, Expectations



2. Ask About and Review Emergency Procedures

- As you are reviewing plans for the day and preparing the room, it's important to review emergency procedures as safety is always the top priority
- Schools practice for emergencies throughout the year so students are more familiar with these procedures than you are:
 - Fire
 - Tornado
 - Intruder in the Building
 - Student Emergency
- These plans might be marked on a bulletin board along with exit procedures
- Review with students first thing in the morning - they can help refresh what they need to do in each situation
- Make contact with teacher next door/across the hall - they can assist with more detail if needed



3. Be Familiar with Student Rosters and the Needs of Students

- Student rosters provide you with a quick idea of how many students are in the class or classes.
- A quick scan of names is helpful to begin learning about each student.
- Calling students by name is important and shows respect:
 - If pronouncing a name presents challenges, try asking for their assistance by saying something like, “Your name is really important to me, and I want to learn how to say it correctly. Could you help me?”
- Check for notes from the classroom teacher(s) about any special needs that students may have related to medical or health supports, small group support, and/or other indicators that students may receive or need additional support:
 - Please remember confidentiality in these instances and helping them transition so as to protect their privacy.

4. Greet Students at the Door and Get to Know Them

- Work to create a warm and welcoming environment from first contact.
- Greet students at the door of the classroom. Smile 😊
- Be sure to keep both students in the classroom and the approaching students in sight as you acknowledge each student's arrival.
- Introduce yourself by the name they should call you and let them know you are the guest teacher for the day or period.
- Ask the student's name and repeat to clarify pronunciation.
- Tell the student you are happy they are at school today.
- Offer a simple gesture after your exchange such as an elbow bump, high five, or a genuine smile.

Students need to know you are excited to be in their class and creating a warm and a safe environment will assist in reducing anxiety and challenging behaviors.



5. Set, Share, and Maintain Expectations for the Class and/or Day

- Be Confident and In Control on the Outside
 - Strong and confident
- Explain and Display Expectations
 - Model those expectations throughout the day
 - Address issues early...do not let them slide
- Be Present and Involved with Your Students
 - Moving about the room, observing, engaging in conversation, etc...
 - Helps to minimize disruptions
- Seek Advice and Thought Partners
 - Don't be afraid or hesitant to seek advice from other Building Staff



6. Be a Thermostat, Not a Thermometer

- Thermometers are in a constant state of change; thermostats control and maintain the temperature we want.
- You create the tone, mood, and temperature of the room.
- Stay 70 degrees and sunny.
- Be proactive and not reactive.



7. Be Kind and Expect Kindness in Return

- Modeling kindness with your words and actions can go a long way in any situation during your time in a school building:
 - This applies to working with students, other teachers and staff, and any visitors, volunteers, parents, and guardians who you may encounter.
- Likewise, expect kindness in return.
 - If it is not reciprocated, that is okay. Continue to be a beacon of positivity for others, smile often, and know that your action impact others.
- Proximity, tone, and volume are really important ways to effectively maintain an effective learning environment:
 - The class will go wherever you take them
 - Loud = Loud | Calm = Calm



8. Respond, Don't React

- This concept is easy to think about, but sometimes more difficult to remember in situations where you and/or a student is escalated. Repeat it to yourself often!
- You are the calmest and most positive person in the room:
 - Do not give away your power by sending students out of the room without first trying to work with them and problem solve together.
 - Avoid threats and yelling...they are not effective and will only further escalate the situation.
 - Instead, try engaging calmly: "Help me understand what you need."
- Consider using some of the following strategies if challenges arise:
 - *Wait Time*: Low level disruptions will subside when you wait them out.
 - *Call Backs*: You say, "1, 2, 3...eyes on me." They say, "1, 2...eyes on you"
 - *Pick Your Battles*...Sometimes walking away and moving on is best
 - Using phrases to redirect, and reinforce desired behaviors such as:
 - "When everyone is quiet, we can...(on to the next preferred activity)"
 - "I really like / appreciate how some of you are doing..."



9. Ask Questions and Seek Out Support from Colleagues

- Everyone at school wants you and your students to have a great day.
- Don't be afraid to ask questions to ensure the best day possible.
- You will want to get to know the school office staff and nearby teachers as they will be best sources of information to answer questions:
 - Introduce yourself and ask if they'd be willing to help if questions arise.
 - Some questions may be more urgent than others.
 - Ask for the the best way to seek their assistance.
 - Don't leave your class unsupervised at any time.
- When reviewing lesson plans, schedules, rosters and other management information, note items for which you might need clarification or that might be missing.
- Seek out the colleagues you have connected with to get guidance for your questions.

10. Know and understand your ethical and professional responsibilities

Kansas Educator Code of Conduct

- Responsibilities to Students:
 - Confidentiality and professional relationships
- Responsibilities to Districts:
 - Follow school district policies, procedures, and practices
 - Complete any reports or reporting with accuracy and honesty
- Responsibilities to Profession:
 - Mandatory Reporter / Reporting
 - Avoid harassment and inappropriate language

Please refer to the Kansas State Department of Education's

Kansas Educator Code of Conduct materials for more specific information.



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