



***Mission:*** To Serve Every Student with Excellence as the Standard.

***Vision:*** Brevard Public Schools will serve our community and enhance students' lives by delivering the highest quality education in a culture of dedication, collaboration, and learning.



# SUBSTITUTE TEACHER HANDBOOK & GUIDE

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## INTRODUCTION

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This handbook is designed to provide information to substitute teachers which will help them be more successful in performing the functions of an effective substitute teacher.

Substitute teaching can be very difficult but also very rewarding. Those who are emotionally and intellectually prepared for the job will be most effective in meeting the needs of the students and of the schools that employ them.

The basic role and responsibility of the substitute is to carry out the instructions of the school and the teacher in the most effective manner possible.

**"There is no substitute for a good substitute teacher."**

### **A Few Facts about Substitute Teaching**

- Students end up spending one full year of their K-12 education with a substitute teacher.
- The #1 request by substitute teachers is training in how to successfully manage inappropriate behavior situations.
- The #1 request by permanent teachers and school administrators request that substitute teachers conduct themselves as professional.
- The #1 request by students is that substitute teachers present stimulating lessons and exciting fill-in activities.
- The #1 reason substitute teachers' love their job is flexibility. The #2 reason is they like with students.

Substitute teachers are crucial to providing support to the BPS School District. Each day that the substitute teacher is in the classroom, ***is a day of education for our students***. Your work plays a vital role in maintaining continuity of instruction and a positive learning environment.

Brevard Public Schools expects our substitute teachers to be professional and prepared. It is expected that substitutes will be confidential and will feel like a part of the school District, be loyal to it, and support its mission to educate students to the best of our ability. We also expect them to be competent, patient, resourceful, independent, and an advocate for students.

## Dress and Grooming

Substitute teachers are expected to dress professionally and appropriately. Dress neatly and appropriately for the workday.

**Remember, a more formal dress often helps to establish authority.**

Exercise good judgment in physical appearance, clothing, and hygiene.

### Examples of INAPPROPRIATE attire:

- All substitutes should dress modestly and present a neat, clean appearance.
- Blue jeans, sweat pants, sweatshirts and shorts should not be worn except for special activities as directed by the principal.
- Blouses, shirts or tops that reveal the midriff or chest **SHOULD NEVER BE** worn.
- Hats and caps are not appropriate for wear inside the buildings.
- Clothing that contains messages that promote alcohol, drugs, tobacco or contains obscene or suggestive language or any other type of message that may cause a disruption or disturbance **SHOULD NEVER BE** worn.

**Remember - Casual Fridays** are at the discretion of the school principal.

**Personal calls** are not allowed when students are in your care. Personal cell phones must be off at all times. We recognize that emergencies can happen, so if you need to make a personal call, please gain permission from the building principal or his/her designee. Nor may you use any other personal items during class time such as: Tablets, Laptops, Smartphones, personal reading material, and/or knitting or crocheting items. Remember, you are there for the students.

Always use common sense when an **accident** or **injury** occurs. Attend to the student involved and send a reliable student to the health office, main office, or closest adult for assistance. Alert the main office as quickly as possible. If a student becomes **ill** they should not be sent off to the health or main office alone. Either send a reliable classmate as an escort or secure help from another staff member.

At various times during the year, fire and tornado drills are held. The fire alarm may sound at any time during the school day. Find out where your students exit in advance. The principal or designee should acquaint each substitute with building rules, the school schedule, and other routines that affect all teachers.

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE AT THE SCHOOL**

Substitutes should report directly to the main/principal's office upon arrival to check in with someone designated to assist you. Some individualized information and data may have been uploaded via your SmartFindExpress account.

**WHEN YOU ARRIVE IN YOUR CLASSROOM**

Locate the teacher's lesson plan and attendance record if this information was not provided to you through SmartFindExpress, email, or at check-in. You are expected to follow the lesson plan to the best of your ability. When the classroom teacher returns he or she should find the instructional program has progressed as intended.

However, sometimes resourcefulness is needed if something unexpected occurs so please plan ahead and develop strategies to address various scenarios. You will find some helpful websites later in this handbook.

**WHEN YOU ARE TEACHING**

One of the most significant things you can do to ensure a successful experience for yourself and for your students is to plan ahead and establish an effective substitute routine. Your preparedness will go a long way in setting the tone for the day. Doing so will allow you to be organized and in control. Make a plan for how you will manage the following:

- Taking attendance
- Dealing with tardy students
- Dealing with students who lack materials
- Passing out instructional materials
- Handling equipment
- Labeling student papers
- Collecting student work
- Preparing to leave at the end of class

**NEVER LEAVE STUDENTS UNATTENDED!**

**Begin teaching the class immediately.** As a guest teacher, you are expected to carry out the lesson plans and assigned duties to the best of your ability. Be sure your directions to the students are clear by checking for understanding and that supervision of the learning environment is provided.

Work to establish rapport with the pupils. Tell them your name and explain that you are substituting for their classroom teacher. Treat the students with respect and courtesy.

1. Notes from parents, or unusual circumstances, should be sent directly to the main office. Examples include requests for permission to be dismissed early or to be excused from an activity.
2. **Student Discipline** - Students are familiar with discipline plans left by their teacher; please try to follow them. Here are some tips from educational experts:
  - **Use a positive approach** – Start with a **positive correction**. Be direct with your request for positive behavior; a direct request to a student to appropriately behave is better than a negative request to stop misbehavior. It is better to make a request in a soft, firm voice rather than a loud voice. Making eye contact will help convey your message.
  - **Give the student time to comply** - After you make a clear request for positive behavior from a student, give him/her a brief moment to comply. Be sure to maintain eye contact and restate the request in a calm manner if necessary.
  - **Don't take it personally** – It is important to stay emotionally detached and remain professional.
  - **Common sense** should be used anytime you are working with students. Make all consequences fit the infraction.
  - **Exercise self-control** by always being in control. As the adult in the classroom, the substitute teacher is expected to be the authority figure.

**Treat all students with respect.**

Avoid any discussions that contain controversial topics, personal qualities, decisions, opinions, or judgments.

If a student becomes non-compliant, there are several techniques you should try that may prevent the situation from escalating:

- **Proximity** is a strategy that is effective for good classroom management. Standing near a disruptive student, while continuing to instruct, will often change their behavior.
- **Relocating** students may be done, but should only be done if other requests to stop the undesired action fail. Asking students to change seat locations may be disruptive and challenging.
- **Never degrade** or intimidate students. Always stick to the rules. Remember, being fair and consistent is an important feature of working with students.
- **Avoid giving threats or ultimatums** - Try a calm, matter-of-fact approach void 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 mentioned techniques, you will need to implement the specific building's discipline procedures. Always consult the school administrator for major discipline issues including when safety is being compromised.

### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE SCHOOL**

1. Once you secure a sub job in SmartFindExpress, you may receive assignment and school specific instructions.
2. If you are unfamiliar with our schools, the principal or designee will accompany you to the classroom and briefly help you get oriented to the job and the school. Please ask for any needed assistance.
3. Neighboring teachers will be glad to help you – just ask!

### **BEFORE YOU LEAVE**

1. Secure the classroom by turning off lights and equipment, close windows and lock all doors.
2. Check in with the principal or designee before you leave for the day. You need to return keys and/or sign a payroll form/time sheet.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

If you follow the recommendations listed below, you will avoid most of the “common” mistakes made by substitute personnel:

- Follow available lesson plans as closely as possible.
- Remember you are not their friend. You are there to replace their teacher for the day. It is fine to smile and be polite, but try and avoid being too friendly. Make sure to 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. A lot of school districts have strict rules on allowing students to have candy, or a student may have an unknown food allergy. So make sure not to bribe students with any kind of food. However, you can explain to students that they must work in order to play. You can offer them small incentives for good behavior, such as 10 minutes free time at the end of the day, or time to watch a video, do their homework, or read a book.
- Use classroom management techniques that allow students to stay in the learning environment. Use office referrals as a last form of discipline. There are a number of books available on classroom management and the Internet can also provide helpful suggestions. Classroom management is an issue that requires constant learning and the continuous acquisition of new skills. It is recommended that teachers research classroom management techniques. This can be done on the Internet or through written literature available in libraries and/or bookstores.
- If lesson plans are not available, let the school administration know and create your own lesson plan to address the learning requirements of the students and/or subject matter. Rely on your own experiences, your substitute pack, ideas from other teachers, and materials in the classroom to facilitate your planning.
- The school administrator is the substitute teacher’s immediate supervisor. Compliance must be given to any requests made by an administrator. If there are questions or concerns regarding the request, contact Substitute services after your assignment is completed.
- Substitutes shall not use corporal punishment – ever! In an age of “good” touch, “bad” touch, the conservative suggestion: **“Don’t touch!”** This warning is for your own protection.
- Interaction with students should be positive and self-esteem building. The goal of the educator is to build students academically and emotionally.
- Substitutes should report all accidents/unusual incidents involving students to administration immediately. It is better to be proactive rather than defensive after the fact.
- There are good days and bad days in any public school classroom. In general, the teacher should try not to personalize negative student behavior, as it is often a response to a situation and not to the instructor.
- Yelling at students conveys a message of desperation to the students. Yelling also tends to cause the volume of classroom noise to increase, rather than decrease. It is best to use alternate forms of attention gaining to regain control of a group of students.
- Students should be actively supervised at all times.
- Keeping students on-task is accomplished by walking around the class and actively engaging with the students to provide guidance and reinforcement as needed.
- Do not allow a classroom situation to get to the point where you are feeling extremely angry. Ask for assistance and suggestions from fellow teachers and/or administrators.
- Interactions with school personnel are professional and cooperative in nature. Comments addressing the quality of a teacher and his/her lesson plans should not be made to students.
- It is important to act with an understanding that students are aware and affected by current events. Interactions with students should be tactful and respectful at all times.
- Accommodations to meet the learning requirements of special needs students should be made by substitute personnel, as they are outlined by the regular classroom teacher in the lesson plan.

- All videos shown to students must be pre-approved by the school administrator.
- No substitute teacher may physically discipline a student. This includes any type of effort to gain compliance from a child.
- Any behavior that is considered to be “threatening, intimidating, or making someone feel unsafe or uncomfortable” is considered to be harassment. Avoid behaviors that “impede someone’s movements or prevent someone from moving freely”.
- Substitute teachers must be flexible and able to improvise an effective lesson plan in the absence of one left by the regular teacher. Survey the classroom to get information about what is being taught. Ask similar grade level/subject area teachers and the students for information about what material is being studied. Build your own “subpack” of teaching materials and resources. Examples can be found in this handbook.
- Personal business, *i.e.* computer use, phone calls and correspondence, is to be taken care of during non-work hours.
- Discriminatory comments regarding a person’s race, color, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, national origin or ancestry, disability, medical condition, veteran status, or any other protected status defined by law, will not be tolerated.
- To protect the privacy of school staff, do not call staff members at home unless given permission to do so by the staff member.
- If there are questions about the appropriateness or safety of any student belongings, contact should be made with the school administration to further investigate the situation. Refrain from looking through backpacks and other student property.
- Flexibility is key in substitute teaching. The substitute must be willing to change job assignments as requested by the school administration to accommodate the needs of the students.
- School computers should not be used unless instructed to do so in the teacher’s lesson plan.
- Students must check out through the office.
- Do not take any type of pictures/videos/etc. without consent of the school site administrator.
- Substitutes should send students appearing or claiming to be ill to the nurse or to the office.
- Do not refuse a child’s request to go to the nurse. Prepare a pass and send with the student.
- Do not refuse to allow students to take a bathroom break if requested.
- Be aware of individual student’s rights. Students are not required to recite or stand for the **Pledge of Allegiance**. You may require respectful silence.
- Do not use religious materials (*i.e.* Christmas, Easter print outs).
- Substitutes shall not detain students at the end of the school day – ever!
- Profanity is never acceptable in a classroom or around students.



## TIPS, TRICKS, AND IDEAS TO HELP YOU

Remember! Always follow any instructions from the classroom teacher as closely as possible. For the times when a student (or the class!) needs something extra to do, you can prepare yourself by having your own substitute survival kit ready to go when you are!

Check out these great websites for ideas and resources to help you put together your own 'Bag of Tricks'!

[Super Substitute Teachers! Enchanted](#)

[Learning](#)

[Ed Helper <https://sites.google.com/site/stephaniefilardo/substitutes>](https://sites.google.com/site/stephaniefilardo/substitutes)

<http://www.substituteteachingatoz.com/resources.html>

<http://www.teacherneedhelp.com/students/subtch.htm>

[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr359.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr359.shtml)

**Reading material to check out:**

[The Substitute Teacher's Organizer: A Comprehensive Resource to Make Every Teaching Assignment a Success](#) *by Jan Herbst*

[Substitute Teaching from A to Z](#) *by Barbara Pressman*

## Legal Issues

Substitute teachers are in effect 'guest' teachers and are subject to all federal, state, and local laws which pertain to regular teachers. They are also expected to abide by the Florida Code of Ethics of the Education Profession in Florida and all policies of Brevard Public Schools. You may learn more about BPS Policies and Procedures by accessing BPS ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES & PROCEDURES located in the help guides section of your substitute webpage.

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.