

How to be a successful supply teacher

As a supply teacher you have the same teaching responsibilities as permanent teaching staff. You will be responsible for preparing and delivering lesson plans, providing feedback, and encouraging and supporting your pupils.

Listed below are our top tips on how to become a successful supply teacher:

Prepare your own resources

Having a bank of suitable resources for the age group you will be teaching is advisable as a backup option if needed. Most schools now have electronic whiteboards, and you should always keep your resources onto a USB stick.

A teaching session might finish early, and it's worth having a few entertaining ideas for times when you need to fill short gaps. For example, a short quiz or a game that recaps the topics of the lesson.

Have a clear plan of how the lessons will go before stepping into the classroom, and make sure to smile and have a positive attitude. You might feel nervous but try not to show it – confidence is key!

Time management

Ensure you know how long it will take for you to arrive and allow yourself enough time to prepare before classroom teaching begins. The teacher you are covering may leave instructions for you. Make sure you are confident with the work you will deliver before the pupils arrive. Familiarise yourself with the school buildings and the location of your lessons for the day, as it is easy to get lost in unfamiliar surroundings.

Ask about the pupils

Ask for a copy of the school's behaviour policy as every school has different guidelines and find out about pupils that may have particular needs so that you can differentiate your lessons accordingly. Take advice from teaching assistants as they are more familiar with the pupils. Keep a register of all pupils, and if access to the normal class register is restricted, a quick list of names is just as effective.

Volunteer for break duties

Check if this is appropriate first as schools usually have a rota for teachers, however, offering to be on break duty is a great way to be memorable in schools. For example, if you will be working in a primary school, children could tell their parents about a nice new supply teacher. Ask if there's anything you can do to help, and this will encourage schools to want to book you again.

Leave handover notes and marking

If you are booked to work at a primary school, make sure to leave a note for the teacher at the end of the day. For secondary schools you'll need to make notes at the end of every lesson. Briefly sign-off if everything went smoothly and record challenging behaviour as this is very useful for the teacher to know.

At a primary school you'll most likely be expected to do the day's marking. Save this until the end of the day as you don't want it to interfere with teaching time.

As a successful supply teacher, it is essential to make your first impression count and to be prepared. Schools want to see good classroom management and happy pupils. If you encourage good behaviour, schools

will most likely ask for you to come back. Ensure we can easily get in touch with you out of school hours for potential future bookings.

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