

**GRAND SALINE
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL
DISTRICT**



**HANDBOOK
FOR
SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS**

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Appreciation of Substitute Service

A substitute teacher has one of the most difficult assignments in the school system. It is the responsibility of the school personnel to establish and maintain a favorable and respectful attitude concerning the substitute and his/her work. Pupils must appreciate the need and the importance of the substitute teacher and be expected to treat him/her in a courteous, kind, and friendly manner.

Grand Saline Independent School District commits to maintain the high status that rightly belongs to the substitute teacher and expresses sincere appreciation to those who serve in this capacity.

* * * *

Children Are Our Future

In teaching children, it is essential that one keep these words constantly in mind.

A child is a person who is going to carry on what you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting, and when you are gone, attend those things which are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they are carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations ... the fate of humanity is in his hands.

-Abraham Lincoln

**Grand Saline Independent School District
400 Stadium Drive
Grand Saline, Texas 75140
903-962-7546**

This handbook has been prepared to help you become better informed concerning your role as a substitute teacher in Grand Saline ISD. We hope it will answer many questions regarding the important role you play in the educational process at Grand Saline.

Our goal is to build your awareness, extend your access to resources, and familiarize you with district procedures and expectations. Please feel free to contact us should you have questions or concerns. We consider ourselves your support team.

Thank you again for your time and effort in helping us educate our students.

District Administration:

Superintendent

Micah Lewis
Cindy Gibson, Secretary

Assistant Superintendent

Debby Morse

Special Education Director

Kim Brewington

Director of Finance

Laura Griffith

Payroll Clerk

Robbie Monk

District Staff:

Athletic Director – Joe Drennon
Food Service Director – Tricia Vaughn
Technology Coordinator – Lance Caffey

Campus Administration:

High School

Ricky LaPrade, Principal
Robin Goff, Counselor
Mindy Redding, Counselor
DeeDee LaPrade, Secretary

Middle School

Ryan Simons, Principal
Debbie Carson, Counselor
Melissa Houser, Secretary

Intermediate School

Tina Core, Principal
Shannon Gardner, Secretary

Elementary School

Lori Hooton, Principal
Kelly Ivy, Secretary

Nurse – Debbie Yarbrough
District Testing Coordinator – Tina Core

Grand Saline Independent School District
Equal Opportunity Policy Statement

1. No administrative officer or employee of the Grand Saline Independent School District, acting in his/her official capacity, may discriminate on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, color or national origin regarding: personnel practices, including assigning, hiring, promoting, compensating, and discharging employees; use of facilities, awarding contracts, and participation in programs.

2. No student shall on basis of sex, race, religion, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity sponsored by this school district except as specifically provided in Title IX implementing regulations.

Inquiries regarding any of these policies should be directed to

Title IX Coordinator: Debby Morse

903-962-8171

District Mission Statement

The Grand Saline Independent School District, in partnership with parents, community members and businesses, provides a safe, caring, and motivational learning environment enabling all students to reach their educational, social and emotional potential. These factors empower graduates to become life-long learners, which in turn allows them to be globally competitive, successful, productive, patriotic members of an ever-changing society.

District Vision Statement

"Changing the World One Student at a Time"

GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBSTITUTES

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR SUBSTITUTING?

Grand Saline Independent School District looks for people who can relate well to children and adults. Former teachers, housewives, business people and others who like working with students and have the school hours free are invited to apply. A high school diploma or GED is required. Applicant must pass a criminal background check before beginning an assignment and must be fingerprinted. If you have not currently completed the fingerprinting process, please contact Kathy Thomason for additional information; you are responsible for paying \$47.45 to be fingerprinted.

WHEN DOES A SUBSTITUTE WORK?

Substitute teachers are considered at-will and no specific amount of work is guaranteed.

MAY SUBSTITUTES RESTRICT THEIR AVAILABILITY?

Substitutes may request to be called for specific campuses or work on specific days. This will assist campuses in limiting their calling to only those individuals desiring to work on their campuses. If you repeatedly turned down opportunities to work within the district, your status as a substitute teacher may be jeopardized.

WHEN ARE SUBSTITUTES CALLED?

If possible, substitutes will be called in advance of the day they are needed. Most calls, however, are placed early in the morning on the day a substitute is needed.

WHAT HOURS ARE EXPECTED OF A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER?

Substitutes are required to follow the campus workday. The school day begins at 7:45 a.m.; substitutes may leave at 3:45 p.m. Check with the campus principal regarding your specific requirements and whether or not the teacher has duty during the school day.

GRAND SALINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

SUBSTITUTE PAY POLICY

Substitute teachers will be paid as follows:

Degreed/Certified	\$85.00/day
Non-Degreed	\$60.00/day

A substitute teacher who teaches in the same classroom for consecutive days will earn as follows. This policy does not apply to a substitute who subs for a paraprofessional or who provides one-on-one supervision to a particular student, nor for a sub in ISS. These must be consecutive days; if you miss a day, it then goes back to the non-consecutive rate.

Degreed/Certified, after 5 th day	\$95.00/day
Non-Degreed, after 15 th day	\$65.00/day

The district's need for substitutes varies from week to week. In some weeks, you may not receive any assignments. Similarly, the district understands that some weeks you may not be able to accept assignments due to illness or other personal reasons.

All substitutes are paid on a monthly basis. You are paid on the 15th, but the payroll runs from the 1st day of the month to the last day of the month. You MUST sign in at the campus office that the teacher is assigned to (not always the campus you go to first). NEVER sign in at two places, unless you are working a half day (am) for a teacher on one campus and, on the same day, working a half day for a teacher on another campus (pm).

SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS	This section applies to a person who is a substitute teacher for the District or a shared services arrangement.
APPLICABILITY	For purposes of the CHRI review requirements, a “substitute teacher” is a teacher who is on call or on a list of approved substitutes to replace a regular teacher and has no regular or guaranteed hours. A substitute teacher may be certified or noncertified.
INFORMATION TO DPS AND TEA	<p>The District shall send or ensure that a person to whom this section applies sends to DPS information required for obtaining NCHRI, which may include fingerprints and photographs.</p> <p>The District shall provide TEA with the name of a person to whom this section applies. TEA shall examine the CHRI and certification records of the person and notify the District if the person:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May not be hired or must be discharged as provided by Education Code 22.085; or 2. May not be employed as a substitute teacher because the person’s educator certification has been revoked or is suspended.
EMPLOYMENT PENDING REVIEW	After the required information is submitted, the person may begin employment, but that employment is conditional upon the review of that person’s CHRI by TEA and must be terminated if TEA makes a determination that the employee or applicant is ineligible for employment.
CRIMINAL HISTORY	<p>The District shall obtain all CHRI that relates to a person to whom this section applies through the Clearinghouse. The District may require the person to pay any fees related to obtaining the CHRI.</p> <p><i>Education Code 22.0836; 19 TAC 153.1101(5), .1111(d)</i></p>

A CODE OF ETHICS FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

PRINCIPLE I: Professional Ethical Conduct

The substitute should endeavor to maintain the dignity of the profession by respecting and obeying the law, demonstrating personal integrity, and exemplifying honesty.

PRINCIPLE II: Professional Practices and Performance

The substitute, after qualifying in a manner established by law or regulation, shall assume responsibilities for professional teaching practices and professional performance and shall continually strive to demonstrate competence.

PRINCIPLE III: Ethical Conduct Toward Professional Colleagues

The substitute, in exemplifying ethical relations with colleagues, shall accord just and equitable treatment to all members of the profession.

PRINCIPLE IV: Ethical Conduct Toward Students

The substitute, in accepting a position of public trust, should measure success by progress of each student toward realization of his potential as an effective citizen.

PRINCIPLE V: Ethical Conduct Toward Parents and Community

The substitute, in fulfilling citizenship responsibilities in the community, should cooperate with parents and others to improve the public schools in the community.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER TO THE SCHOOLS

1. You are requested to accept assignments for which you are qualified in any school (based on guidelines you have provided to the district).
2. When you receive a call for a substitute assignment, please be certain that you: (a) answer the telephone yourself, (b) have a pencil and pad by the telephone to write down your instructions, (c) write down the name of the school campus, (d) get the teacher's name and assignment for whom you are working, (e) report first to the principal's office upon arrival at the assigned school.
3. Substitutes should be dressed professionally and in accordance with the position in which you are substituting. When assisting in P.E./Athletics, dress in clothes that will allow you to lead the various physical activities (for example, do not wear flip-flops).
4. Substitutes should respect the confidentiality of both teachers and students. A substitute teacher should never discuss any school-related issue(s) either publicly or privately.
5. Report to the building principal promptly and sign in. Given sufficient advance notice, he/she should report at the same time the regular classroom teachers report for duty: substitutes should arrive by 7:45 a.m. and may leave at 3:30 p.m., or upon completion of assigned duties. Be sure you are aware of special duties or assignments.
6. Introduce yourself to neighboring classroom teachers.
7. Accept the responsibility for helping to create and maintain cordial relationships between teachers, pupils, school and community. Your role as a substitute is professional, even though you are not the regular teachers.
8. Acquaint yourself with fire and emergency drill regulations, assigned exits, and restroom area procedures.
9. Locate the classroom teacher's daily schedule, lesson plan, seating chart, textbooks, and other materials.
10. The plans provided by the regular teacher should be followed as nearly as possible, and the regular routine should be maintained. Please leave a note for the teacher, relating how much of the lesson plan you were able to accomplish, and list any special problems that might have occurred during the day.
11. Write your name on the board.
12. Students should not be allowed to leave the room except for emergencies. What constitutes an emergency is at the discretion of the substitute teacher. Never should more than one student at a time be out of your room.
13. Unless requested by the regular teacher, do not assign written work and leave it to be graded. Written work assigned which is beyond the lesson plan of the regular teacher

should be graded and left for examination. On long-term assignments, such work should be reviewed and recorded, unless otherwise directed. Do not record in the gradebook.

14. Classroom attendance should be recorded according to each individual school policy. Substitute teachers are not to make any entries in a teacher's gradebook.
15. Supervision of halls and corridors is a responsibility of all teachers, especially when pupils are coming into or leaving the building and at bell times.
16. Classes are not to be dismissed early.
17. You are expected to be on duty the entire day and perform all duties of the regular teacher, unless otherwise requested.
18. Report any serious accident or illness to the principal or nurse immediately.
19. Complete whatever reports are requested, both for the school office and for the regular teacher.
20. Before leaving at the close of the day, report to the principal's office to determine if you will be needed the following day.
21. Substitutes may be asked to work for various teachers throughout the day. They do not automatically have a conference period. They will be allowed lunch times. The principal's secretary will inform them if special tasks are needed.
22. Substitutes should never take a class into the library unless that is the plan of the regular classroom teacher. No class should be sent to the library without a teacher. **This must have been cleared with the librarian.** No more than 4-5 students should be sent to the library at a time without the teacher. Due to the limited size of the library, students should come to the library only if they have research that needs to be completed.

SUBSTITUTES WHO FAIL TO COMPLY WITH THESE REQUIREMENTS MAY BE REMOVED PERMANENTLY FROM THE "APPROVED SUBSTITUTE LIST"

When a person has made a commitment to substitute, they should remember that the principal, the teacher who is absent, and the students are relying on them to be there. If any emergency occurs making it impossible to report, the principal should be notified immediately.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER

1. Have the following materials in or on the desk:
 - a. **Daily plans** made out in sufficient detail
 - b. Weekly and daily time **schedule** of classes.
 - c. List of students' names and **seating chart**.
 - d. List of students in various **reading groups**. (Elementary)
 - e. List of supervisory responsibilities such as extra **duty** at lunch, recess, etc.
 - f. Fire drill and other **emergency procedures**.
 - g. Important or unusual information about any child (physical problems, etc.).
2. Have on desk copies of textbooks, manuals, and workbooks being used.

GENERAL POLICIES

Release of Children

Any outsider who comes to the classroom for information about a child or who comes to the classroom asking that a child be released from school must be directed to the principal's office. In any event, **children are not to be released from the classroom** without official notice from the building principal.

School Property

It is expected that the substitutes will maintain good order wherever assigned, and create such conditions as are conducive to a good learning situation. The regular classroom teacher is legally and morally charged with the care of school property as well as the welfare of the children.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Respect the right of confidentiality of all students and school personnel. A substitute teacher should never discuss any school-related issue(s) either publicly or privately.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT

The substitute teacher is expected to maintain a level of discipline in the classroom which is conducive to good learning. A well-organized and skillfully conducted class will have fewer discipline problems. Your physical bearing and tone of voice affect the reaction of a class to you. A positive attitude will do much to win the respect of the students. The basic premise of good discipline is to state your expectations of behavior from the beginning of class. **It is never correct for a substitute teacher to strike a child.** The points below offer some sound and proven advice.

- *Start the day in the manner in which you wish to continue.
- *Know what lessons you will present, at what time you will present them, and the method you will use.
- *Observe carefully prescheduled routines and schedules.
- *Avoid threats, yet be firm. Do not get in power struggles with the students.
- *Never touch any student while implementing any form of discipline.
- *Treat all students equally in terms of respect and dignity.
- *Strive for consistency and fairness.
- *Stand when presenting a lesson.
- *Speak loudly enough to be heard, but softly enough to command attention.
- *Correction should be constructive.
- *Avoid being too friendly with students. Maintain an appropriate teacher-student relationship. **DO NOT** let students address you by your first name.
- *Never should a teacher punish a whole class for the misbehavior of a few students.
- *Never embarrass or humiliate a child in front of peers. The student should be removed from the group until the teacher has the opportunity to speak with the student. Reprimands should be private whenever possible.
- *When individual students cause behavior problems which are disruptive and cannot be handled by the substitute, these students should be sent to the office with a referral explaining the circumstances. The substitute should not leave the classroom unattended.

TIPS ON CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

1. Know their names. Pick out any who disturb class and have them help you – even the smallest task can put them on your side.
2. Begin the day strictly and firmly. Let the children know “anything doesn’t go.” The substitute’s first words and actions usually go a long way to set the day’s discipline. You must commend respect with your actions.
3. Remain calm and relaxed. Don’t lose your “cool”.
4. Maintain established routines as much as possible.
5. Be positive. Try to see that every child has some success or praise each day. Just a pleasant word or an appreciative smile works wonders.
6. Keep children as busy as possible.
7. Strictness is important. Children need to know that you can command the situation and will.
8. Solve problems “on the spot.” Don’t degrade the child in front of others, but do handle situations when they occur.
9. Deal with the individual child, not the group, when corrections are necessary. Be sure to have all the facts. Listen to all sides of the story. Focus attention on the problem. Give the child the benefit of the doubt.
10. Be firm. Rather than issuing an ultimatum, however, give the child a choice (e.g. meeting the needs of the classroom for that day, not taking part in the classroom activities by moving his desk to the back of the room). Give the child only one chance, and if he has made the wrong choice, and cannot follow instructions, then follow through.
11. With elementary youngsters, encourage them to make the regular teacher proud of them.
12. With the junior high, use eye contact – be firm and direct.
13. Also with junior high, use nonverbal directions where possible. Avoid personal confrontations.
14. Class extra noisy? Give a surprise quiz on the material covered in the period.
15. If you do send a child to the principal’s office, be sure to send a detailed referral form with him.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HAVING A SUCCESSFUL SUBSTITUTE TEACHER EXPERIENCE

- ✓ Have pride in the profession.
- ✓ Support school policies.
- ✓ Avoid making comparisons of various schools, campuses or school personnel.
- ✓ Respect the confidential information contained in school records.
- ✓ Respect the confidence of fellow teachers.
- ✓ Report any serious situations or problems to the principal.
- ✓ Make a reasonable effort to respond to all calls for substitute teaching.
- ✓ Do your best at all times on all assignments.
- ✓ Show an interest in teaching methods and curriculum.
- ✓ Try to attend and become involved in the school district's programs.
- ✓ Start the day out quickly, firmly, concisely. Be pleasant. Appear confident. The substitute's first words and actions usually go a long way to set the day's discipline. You must commend respect with your actions. Children need to know that you can command the situation and will.
- ✓ With any group ... do smile ... be friendly ... show enthusiasm.
- ✓ The substitute teacher must be ready, sometimes on an hour's notice, to keep their pupils motivated, captivated, animated, and coordinated ... no matter what the subject or grade. They must be elastic, enthusiastic, and on occasion ... gymnastic!

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER'S CLASSROOM

Be pleasant.

Be firm and fair.

Deal with each child in a kind and just manner.

Be prepared (when possible).

Talk with student, not at them.

Have a sense of humor but don't overdo.

Make directions clear and concise.

Follow normal classroom procedures.

Do not leave students unsupervised.

Respect each child.

Be enthusiastic.

Indicate self-confidence.

Be professional.

Be patient.

Be prompt.

Avoid threats.

Ask for help when needed.

Maintain dignity.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SUBSTITUTES

1. Do not use profanity while on district property.
2. Cell phones should not be used during class time. Check with your campus administrator regarding use between classes. You may use your cell phone during conference times if you have not been given another assignment.
3. Don't bring a book to read during class time. You are to monitor and assist students when you are not instructing.
4. You must conduct any assigned duties the teacher has that day.

Special Education

A good rule of thumb is the term, "Need to Know Basis." Does the person you are about to tell any details to "need to know" information in order to help the student. If not, don't say anything. For example, a spouse doesn't need to know who is in a resource class. Information to be communicated on a "need to know basis" only applies to school district personnel and parents / guardians. Assume that others do not need to know.

Working with Paraprofessionals

One of the greatest things about the special education classroom is the amount of support generally available from experienced paraprofessionals. Use their individual expertise about classroom procedures and specific students to make your day successful. It is important, however, that you remember that you are substituting for the teacher, not the paraprofessional. Be willing to delegate when appropriate.

- Define your working relationship early. You are the teacher. You are responsible for ensuring that the lesson plans are carried out.
- Ask questions to clarify your responsibilities. After reading the lesson plans, address any questions you have about the classroom routines, students, or specific responsibilities with the paraprofessional. Define what you and the paraprofessional(s) will do in case of emergency. Do not think that asking questions or asking for help makes you appear less capable.
- Let the paraprofessional do his / her job. The classroom paraprofessional may be willing and able to assume some degree of authority for conducting classroom activities. Some students may work better with a familiar face. Discuss roles and responsibilities with the paraprofessional before issues develop.
- Respect the paraprofessional's level of knowledge and expertise. Be teachable. The paraprofessional knows the classroom and the students. You can value their experience without diminishing your own.

Be Familiar with Special Education Terms and Laws

As a substitute teacher, you need to have a basic understanding of terms and acronyms used in special education situations. Below are some key terms and a brief synopsis of special education law that you need to be familiar with.

- **Assistive Technology:** The use of devices that increase the ability of students to get along in society or that improve their quality of life (wheelchairs, computers, hearing aids, etc.)
- **Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP):** A plan written by the IEP team for an individual student that specifically outlines what procedures and practices will be used to reinforce positive behaviors and decrease undesirable behaviors.
- **Curriculum-Based Assessment (CBA):** The practice of obtaining direct and frequent measures of student performance based on a series of objectives from a classroom curriculum
- **Individualized Education Plan (IEP):** A group of educational and related services personnel who develop, carry out, and evaluate the individual education plan, or IEP.
- **Inclusion:** Involving students with disabilities as active participants in general education classroom activities. Five effective, or attitudinal, benefits of inclusion are 1) the nondisabled students learn to be more responsive to others; 2) new and valued relationships develop; 3) nondisabled students learn something about their own lives and situations; 4) students learn about values and principles; and 5) students gain an appreciation of diversity in general.
- **Least Restrictive Environment:** A location in which students have a maximum opportunity to interact with students who do not have disabilities.

Public Law 94-142 (Individuals with Disability Education Act)

Passed in 1975 and updated most recently in May 2004, “The Education for All Handicapped Children Act” has been amended and is called the “IDEA” or the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.” It entitles all students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 to free, appropriate public education. Presently, the terms *disability* and *disable* are used in place of handicap and handicapped.

The law defines individuals with disabilities to include those who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech-impaired, visually handicapped, seriously disturbed, or orthopedically impaired; having multiple handicaps; or have other health impairments or learning disabilities and therefore need special educational services.

IDEA also provides ALL students with disabilities with the right to be served in the least restrictive environment – this means that they must be educated and treated in a manner similar to their nondisabled peers. This usually consists of placing children with disabilities in the regular classroom.

Who decides how children with disabilities will be educated? IDEA requires that a team consisting of the student, his / her parent(s), teachers, principals, and other professionals develop an

individual education plan (IEP) detailing the goals and objectives of the educational services to be provided. The IEP list all special and regular activities that the student will participate in.

Section 504

This section of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against people based on their disability. Students may not be left out of public school activity only because of a disability. The major difference between Section 504 and IDEA is that the definition of a “disability” is broader under Section 504. In addition to categories of disability mentioned above, it covers student with AIDS, tuberculosis, hepatitis, allergies, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, and many others that may not be covered by IDEA.

Instructional Consistency

You will often be working with students who especially need structure and consistency, possibly more than their peers without disabilities, when working in the special education classroom. It is extremely important to continue instruction by following the lesson plans left by the permanent teacher. Additionally, be sure to implement the same classroom procedures.

Follow the schedule as outlined by the permanent teacher. Some undesirable behaviors from students can be avoided by maintaining their structured routines. Carefully note the daily schedules for each student. They often have related service personnel (language or hearing specialists, occupational therapist, and physical therapists) come into the classroom. At other times they may leave the classroom to attend classes in other school locations.

It is also important to become familiar with behavior intervention plans (BIPs) that may have been implemented for some students. These plans have been written by the IEP team and must be carried out with precision. There are usually specific things that should happen when a student does something either desirable or undesirable. If the permanent teacher’s lesson plans do not mention any students with behavior plans, you may want to check by asking the paraprofessional. In some cases, behavior reports go home daily to parents that detail the behavior of the student throughout the day. Ask for any help you need to continue this system.

As a general guideline of achieving continuity of instruction, if you know the permanent teacher does something, you should keep doing it too. Also, let the permanent teacher know in your substitute teacher report what you were or were not able to accomplish with the students so that s / he knows where to continue upon return.

Knowing Students and Meeting All Their Needs

Meeting individual students needs requires sensitivity to their behaviors and developing a keen ability to communicate with each student. Some students have specific needs involving medical issues,

transportation, materials, and strategies for instruction and behavior. Be as attentive as possible to the students and keep the following guidelines in mind:

- The permanent teacher knows the students, what is required by their IEP (individualized educational program), and has drawn up lesson plans to meet those needs.
- You may need to locate yourself to the close proximity to offer assistance and help the students stay focused. A gentle reminder will often suffice.
- Use the student's name first to get his/her attention (e.g., "Tamara, please place the paper in the trash." Avoid "Place the paper in the trash, Tamara")
- You may need to repeat yourself more often than usual. Be patient. Check for student understanding (e.g., "Tamara, please tell me what I asked you to do.").
- Be flexible. Schedules can change. Students may be transitioning in and out of the general education setting throughout the day.
- Be aware that some students may have experienced years of failure. Help them find success by recognizing and praising small successes.
- In class discussions, if a student responds with an incorrect answer, provide clues or a follow-up question to help him/her think of the correct answers.
- Deal with a student individually if problems arise. Do not single him/her out in front of the class.
- Present short and varied instructional tasks planned with the students' success in mind.
- Allow students to use learning aids to assist them with their work as directed by the instructions left by the permanent teacher.
- Check with a paraprofessional, the principal, or another teacher before using any specialized teaching equipment or machines.
- Do not hesitate to ask for assistance from the principal or another teacher if you have concerns or questions during the day.

While some special teaching strategies have been identified to appropriately teach students with some particular disabilities, it remains true that good practices apply in most situations.

- Students with autism need explicit assistance in identifying cues for social occasions and responding in ways considered appropriate by others. When interacting with students with autism, use the communication system they use. Many students with autism require a very structured classroom, clear expectations, fast-paced instruction, and positive consequences for acceptable behavior. Keep classroom activities as regular and predictable as possible.
- When working with students who are blind, be sure to keep the classroom environment and layout consistent. Find out what assistive devices the student uses and allow those devices to be readily available. Ask students if you may assist them in moving from one place to the next.
- When working with students who are deaf or hearing impaired speak clearly with your face and lips in full view of the student. Do not talk loudly unless the student asks you to. Use the form of communication that the student uses.
- Give students with emotional disorders genuine praise for their success. Point out the student's successes so she/he can build his/her self-esteem. Make expectations small

and achievable. Maintain trust by making eye contact, talking in a straightforward way, and listening carefully.

- When working with students with learning disabilities try to understand the student's frustration, but don't accept "I don't know" as an answer. Allow more time to complete the assignment/task and be patient. Teach lessons in small parts and combine auditory and visual information (say it and write it).
- Your interaction with students with mental retardation will depend on the specific student. Use clear and simple language and check for understanding. Get the student's attention (say name and make eye contact) before giving instructions. Break tasks into small parts. Recognize students when they are successful and be specific in your praise. Students will often imitate what they hear and see, so always model appropriate social behaviors.
- Use the appropriate descriptions and helpful tips included in the other categories as you interact with students with multiple disabilities.
- When working with students with orthopedic impairments using appropriate interaction depends on the specific characteristics of the student. Some students may require physical lifting or transferring. Be sure that the paraprofessionals or other staff in the classroom handle these procedures. They have been trained in correct body positioning so they do not injure the student or themselves.
- If a student with epilepsy experiences a seizure, remain calm and follow the procedures outlined by the permanent teacher. These may include calling the office or someone for help and recording the time and length of the seizure.
- When working with students with attention deficit problems, keep in mind that they have difficulty attending to task in the classroom and may appear impulsive or out-of-control. They are easily distracted. It is helpful if you have the student sit where they will not be disturbed by people passing by their desk. Keep instructional materials and manipulatives out of the students reach until it is time to use them. Describe expectations positively instead of what should not be done. Let the students learn by doing hands-on activities. Keep instructions fast-paced if the student appears bored; slow instructions if s/he appears hyperactive.
- When students have speech or language impairments be supportive and reassuring – students are sometimes self-conscious of their disorder and may give up easily. Listen carefully and patiently and use clear and simple instructions.
- Students with traumatic brain injury require understanding, patience, and encouragement as the student works toward recovering abilities and skills.

Special education teachers find their jobs very enjoyable and rewarding. As you spend time working with students with special needs, you will also find satisfaction at the end of the day.

First Aid and Safety

Most classroom and playground accidents should be handled with common sense. Students who are injured should be sent to the office where a school nurse or secretary can administer first aid. Don't fall into the trap where students are continually asking to go to the office for band-aids or ice for fake injuries. In the event of a severe injury, do not move the student. Remain with the student, send another student or teacher for help, and try to keep the other students calm.

Never give medication to a student, not even aspirin. If a student requires medication, it should be administered through the school nurse, secretary, or other designated medical personnel.

Learn how to handle situations involving blood and other bodily fluids. Listed below are the OSHA Universal Precautions for dealing with these situations.

OSHA Universal Precautions for Handling Exposure to Blood/Bodily Fluids

1. All blood / bodily fluids should be considered infectious regardless of the perceived status of the individual.
2. Avoid contact with blood / bodily fluids if possible. Immediately notify the school nurse, administrator, or his / her designated first aid person.
3. Allow the injured individual to clean the injury if possible.
4. If it is not possible for the individual to clean the injury, disposable gloves should be worn. Gloves are to be discarded in a designated lined bag or container.
5. Clothing that has been exposed should be placed in a plastic bag and sent home with the individual.
6. Upon removal of gloves, hands should be washed thoroughly with warm water and soap.
7. Surfaces contaminated with blood / bodily fluids should be cleaned thoroughly with disinfectant. The cleaning should be completed by the custodian, administrator, or his/her designated individual responsible for cleanup.

Advice from School Nurses for Substitute Teachers

1. Do not dispense medication (prescription or over-the-counter) to any student. Send them to the office or school clinic where they have a record of the written permission to give the student the medication, the prescribed amount, and a system for recording the times and dosage administered.
2. Refer all students with injuries (even minor ones) to the office so the normal school procedures can be followed. In an emergency, you may need to escort the student to the office. Or, in a less serious situation, have another student accompany the injured student.
3. Carry to school each day a pair of disposable gloves that are waterproof and made of either latex or vinyl, for use in the event of an emergency that requires you to come in direct contact with student's injury.
4. Always wear protective gloves when you come in contact with blood, bodily fluids, and torn skin, or when handling materials soiled with the same.
5. If you come in contact with bodily fluids from a student, throw your gloves away in a lined garbage can. Better yet, seal the soiled gloves in a small plastic bag before depositing them in the trash. After you remove the gloves, wash your hands for 10 seconds with soap and warm running water.
6. Encourage students to wash their hands before meals and when using the restrooms to reduce exposure to germs.
7. Do not allow students who are bleeding to participate in class until the bleeding has stopped and the wound has been cleaned and completely covered.
8. Check with the school office when there is a student injury. Some schools may require you to complete an accident report form. If so, leave a copy for the permanent teacher and keep one for your records.
9. Prevention is the best antidote for medical emergencies. Always stay with the students. Contact another adult if you need to leave the students at any time. If you have recess duty, walk around the playground and be proactive about potentially dangerous behavior. Remember, you are the adult in charge.

As a general rule: Do not touch a student who is bleeding, even if you use gloves. If a student has a bloody nose or cut knee, hand him/her the box of tissues or paper towel, instruct him/her to hold it on his/her wound, and then send him/her to the office or nurse's clinic for further care. Students who are bleeding should not be allowed to participate in class activities until the bleeding has stopped and the wound has been cleaned and completely covered.

Legal Aspects of the Job

An overall consideration when substitute teaching is your legal responsibility in the classroom and school. The following are some legal responsibilities you should be aware of. An understanding of these responsibilities requires some questioning on your part as to specific school / district policies.

- **Supervision Of Students** – the substitute teacher who has physical control of classroom has a duty to keep students safe and orderly. In many states, the teacher acts as *loco parentis* – in the place of a parent – and is allowed to use his/her judgment in a manner similar to a parent. The standard is the reasonable use of professional judgment for the safety and orderly education of students.
- **Due Care And Caution** – A teacher is required to exercise due care and caution for the safety of the students in his/her charge. Essentially, this means acting reasonably and with safety in mind, being able to explain circumstances and your actions, and following school safety policies and procedures.
- **Release of Students** – Due to possible restraints on who may have custody of a child, students should not be allowed to leave the building during the school day without express consent from the office.
- **Administering Medication** – Medication should only be administered by the school nurse or other appropriate health personnel, not the classroom or substitute teacher. If you know of medication requirements of a student, the school health professional should be notified.
- **Confidentiality** – It is unprofessional and against the law in many states to disclose confidential information about your students. Generally, a substitute teacher should avoid comments about individual students that convey private information (i.e., grades, medical condition, learning or discipline problems, etc.)
- **Anecdotal Records** – Maintaining notes on particular incidents in the classroom can protect you in problematic situations. If you feel that a classroom occurrence might be questioned, note the date and time, the individuals involved, the choices for action considered, and the action taken.
- **Discipline Policies** – A substitute teacher should know the state's position on corporal punishment and the school's policy over various aspects of discipline. Some states require a school to have a policy, and often these policies indicate a specific person, such as the principal, as disciplinarian. If in doubt, referring students to the building principal is sound advice. When sending a student to the principal due to discipline matters, the substitute teacher maintains the duties of supervision and due care for both the individual child and the remainder of the class. Proper action may be detailed in the school policy or may require your independent sound judgment. Possible actions include having another child accompany the child, sending another child to bring someone from the office to intervene, or having another teacher watch your class while you take the child to the office.
- **Dangerous Situations** – A substitute teacher is responsible for making sure the learning environment is safe. This includes things such as the arrangement of desk so as not to block exits and proper supervision during the use of potentially dangerous classroom equipment. A teacher must also consider the potential for problems in certain kinds of classes. Planned activities in a physical education, science, shop, or home economics class may be uncomfortable for the substitute teacher. In such cases, the substitute teacher may choose to do an alternate activity that they feel can be conducted safely.

Remember - Never leave your students unsupervised.

Child Abuse Reporting

Purpose

The purpose of child abuse reporting legislation is to protect the best interest of children, offer protective services to prevent harm to children, stabilize the home environment, preserve family life whenever possible, and encourage cooperation among the states in dealing with the problem of child abuse.

Duty to Notify

Any school employee (including substitute teachers) who knows or reasonably believes that a student has been neglected, or physically or sexually abused, shall **immediately notify** the campus principal, the nearest peace office, law enforcement agency, or office of the State Division of Human Services.

It is not the responsibility of the school employees to prove that the student has been abused or neglected, or to determine if the student is in need of protection. Investigations are the responsibility of the Division of Human Services. Investigations by education personnel prior to submitting a report should not go beyond that necessary to support a reasonable belief that a reportable problem exist.

Remember to report suspected abuse **immediately**. Persons making reports or participating in an investigation of alleged child abuse or neglect in good faith are immune from any civil or criminal liability that might otherwise arise from those actions.

Special Duties and Responsibilities

As part of some assignments your responsibilities may include hall, lunch, or bus duty. Specific instructions associated with such an assignment should be explained by the principal / secretary or outlined in the permanent teacher's lesson plan. If not, keep the following in mind:

- Supervisory duties involve more than just being in the vicinity of the students. Your job is to supervise student actions and activities to ensure a safe environment and experience.
- Proactive measures help to successfully deter potential problem situations. Your active presence is usually enough to discourage inappropriate behavior.
 - Be alert and attentive to what students are doing.
 - Remain standing.
 - Move about the area you are supervising as much as possible.
- Should a problem arise, intervene before the situation gets out of control, and don't hesitate to ask for help from another teacher.
- Never leave a group of students unsupervised.

In Conclusion

It has often been said that there is no such thing as a "normal" school day. Fire drills always occur at the least convenient times; assemblies alter usual schedules and routines; field trips, epidemics, and school competitions often result in large numbers of students being absent; and just the fact that you are there as a substitute teacher means that is not a "normal" day for the students in your classes. Knowledge, flexibility, and a sense of humor are key to making the best out of any situation. Learn all that you can about school policies, procedures, and responsibilities. Recognize that things will rarely go exactly as you or the permanent teacher have planned and be prepared to make accommodations. Lighten up and laugh, including at yourself – it will make it a much better day for everyone.