

TWENTY-FIVE TIPS FOR SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

1. Arrive at school early to survey lesson plans, locate materials, review fire and earthquake instructions, and meet a few teachers.
2. Look over the seating chart and zero in on a few names so that you can establish a rapport immediately.
3. Ask questions – regular staff members will be glad to help.
4. Be confident, concise and firm. Your first words and actions go a long way toward setting the tone of the day.
5. Follow the regular teacher's lesson plans and discipline system to the best of your ability.
6. Speak softly and wait until all the students are listening before giving instructions.
7. Deal with the individual, not the group, when discipline problems occur. Be firm and stay in control of the situation. Request help if needed.
8. Have your own simple discipline and reward system in case you can't figure out the classroom's behavior management system.
9. Avoid commanding and threatening. Solicit cooperation. You are on the same team.
10. Compliment the students on class displays, behavior, enthusiasm, etc.
11. Circulate as students are working. Make positive comments and/or put various colored pluses on their papers (i.e. green for a proper heading, red for working quietly, and blue for having solved a problem correctly).
12. Listen to the students and be observant.
13. Allow students to help you with daily routines – involve the students. When appropriate, help students check their own work.
14. Bail out of a lesson that is failing. Move on to something you are comfortable with or review.
15. Have a story, game or other activity prepared in case you finish lessons early.
16. Have generic lessons that can be used at a variety of grade levels just in case a blank spot occurs.
17. Avoid assigning "busy work."
18. Never leave the class unattended.
19. Grade papers that can easily be checked.
20. Do not dismiss students early.
21. Dismiss students in an orderly fashion, one group at a time.
22. Be respectful of classroom equipment and supplies. Put pencils, paper, books, etc. away neatly.
23. Leave the room in order. Have the students' pickup papers, straighten desks, etc.
24. Lock the door when you leave the room.
25. Leave a note for the teacher. Include positive experiences, a progress report, list of absent students, and names of cooperative, as well as, uncooperative students.