

# Substitute Teacher's Handbook

Southwestern Union Conference  
Office of Education  
Burleson, Texas

## I. LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

- A. Governing Boards of schools shall classify as substitute employees those persons employed to fill positions of regularly employed persons absent from service. Substitute service does not apply toward retirement.
- B. Substitute List

An approved "Substitute List" is started at the beginning of each year by submitting names of substitutes to the local school board for approval. Names can be added to or deleted from the approved list throughout the school year.

## II. APPLICATION/EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURES

- A. Application, Interview, Background Check, Approval

The employment procedure starts with the submission of the application form. A personal interview is necessary and will be scheduled at a mutually convenient time. Following the passing of a background check and submission of the necessary payroll forms, the name can be recommended to the school board for approval. As soon as the name appears on the approved list of substitutes, the individual may be called to start substituting.

**The local school board may employ qualified persons who have had their background checked through the local conference office of education on a temporary basis to fill positions of regularly certificated employees absent from service. Local conference boards of education, K-12, have the option of omitting the background check for substitute teachers who teach in their system for ten or fewer days during a school year.** SWUC Code 3114.7

- B. Payroll Forms

Withholding Forms (state and federal)  
I-9 Eligibility Form (Immigration)  
Child Abuse Form  
Verification of freedom from tuberculosis. (If local state requires)

### III. SALARY AND FRINGE BENEFITS

#### A. Day-to-Day Pay Rate

Substitutes are paid for each period of service. The period (day) rate is determined by the local conference. You will be advised of the current rate at the time you make application.

#### B. Reporting Days Worked

Although individual schools keep records and report substitute teacher time to the conference office, it is recommended that substitutes keep their own record of service as a means of verifying that all of the time worked is properly compensated.

#### C. Pay Periods

Pay warrants are issued between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of the month, and are mailed to the home address of substitutes.

#### D. Changes of Addresses

Since warrants are mailed to home addresses, it is imperative that address changes be reported immediately to the conference payroll department by submitting a new W-4 form. The forms are available at the school sites.

#### E. Deductions

1. Both federal and state income tax is withheld from pay warrants.
2. Additional deductions mandated by state or federal government will also be deducted.

#### F. Insurance, Sick Leave, and Vacation

Substitutes are not eligible to receive insurance benefits, nor do they accumulate sick, personal leave or vacation time.

### IV. ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURES

#### A. Reporting of Absences by Regular Teachers

Teachers report their absences in one of two ways: they may advise the school head teacher or principal, or in the case of one teacher schools, they may advise the local school board chairperson.

B. Filling Vacancies Requiring Substitutes

Substitutes may be called during the late afternoon, in the evening, or in the early morning, beginning about 6:00 a.m.

V. **PROCEDURES AT THE SCHOOL SITE**

A. Arrival at School Site

Report to the school office at least 30 minutes before your first teaching period begins.

B. Information Provided at the Site

Materials and/or information received should include the following:

- Room assignment
- Key
- Map of School (In larger schools)
- Attendance reporting information
- Announcements for the day
- Special day schedule
- Other verbal information/instructions

C. Lesson Plans

Lesson plans are generally left in the classroom. However, if the absence is an emergency the head teacher/principal will have the necessary information for you to proceed with the class.

D. Procedures When Leaving the Site

Verify your status for the following day.  
Return keys and other materials as requested.  
Report any unusual problems or event.

VI. **SUBSTITUTE RESPONSIBILITIES**

A. Every effort should be made to carry on the program of the regular teacher. In addition, you are expected to observe the same ethical code expected of a regular teacher. Policies, procedures, and teaching methods

differ widely among school classrooms. As a substitute you may become more acutely aware of such differences than others.

Although you may not always approve of existing policies, procedures and methods, your criticism of another teacher is only destructive and negates the positive relationship between regular staff and substitute staff that is vital to a sound educational program.

B. Substitute responsibilities may vary from school to school; however, in general, you should:

- Follow the regular teacher's lesson plans
- Be prepared to maintain a productive program if lesson plans are not provided.
- Maintain accurate attendance accounting
- Maintain normal classroom routines and disciplinary procedures.
- Immediately request assistance when a reasonable learning environment cannot be maintained.
- Leave a written report to the teacher explaining any deviations from the lesson plan and describing class progress and behavior.
- Follow the regular teacher's requests regarding grading of written assignments.
- Follow school rules regarding excusing students from the classroom.
- Follow school emergency procedures
- Organize and label completed work
- Place copies of all notices and bulletins received where easily found by the regular teacher.
- Leave the classroom in satisfactory order.

### QUALITIES OF A GOOD SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

\* *Follow the sub plan* the classroom teacher left as closely as reasonably possible. Teachers spend a lot of time preparing for a sub according to what they need to have accomplished that day. Show respect by doing what is asked.

\* *Leave notes for the teacher* about the following issues.

- What parts of the sub plan were accomplished and what things did not get done. A brief explanation of why is greatly appreciated.
- Description of any discipline problems.
- Positive comments about the class. (Always give good with the bad!)

- Detailed description of how much help you gave students when they worked on assignments. It wouldn't be going too far to mention that you had a difficult time helping students with specific questions or assignments. This gives the teacher an indication of what may need to be re-taught when he/she comes back.
- Let the classroom teacher know if you allowed students to work in groups. (If the teacher does not specify that they are to work in groups, they are to work individually.)
- \* *Grade Work* when possible. Teachers appreciate it when simple grading is completed. It is a nice touch for teachers to be able to come back without a load of assignments to grade. If the key was left behind, that may be your clue! Grade any objective or simple assignments in the free time that you may have. Leave complicated short answers, essays or themes for the classroom teacher to grade.
- \* *Leave the Teacher's Desk Organized* at the end of the day. Use paperclips and sticky-notes to organize student work. Organize by part of the day (elementary), type of assignments or by class period (secondary). You cannot organize too much! The more organized you leave the room, the more you will be appreciated.
- \* *Be Flexible*, after all we expect students to be flexible the day we have a sub. When transitions don't go as well as planned or when you find out you have music at 10:00 instead of math, don't lose your head or your sense of humor.
- \* *Be Patient*. Students, especially young ones, are apprehensive and don't like changing from a normal routine. Expect them to ask the same question 15 times. Smile!!

## GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS IN SUBSTITUTING

### A. Immediate Tasks

When you substitute, you have two immediate tasks to accomplish: organizing procedures and the day's schedule; and, establishing yourself as "teacher."

Upon arriving at the classroom you will need to locate necessary classroom materials. Your first action should be to place your name on the board where it can remain all day.

Letting students know what you expect of them is your second task. Establishing your expectations includes setting firm, consistent limits and being aware of the students' need for warm, personal attention. Let the students see that you are comfortable and secure, and will enforce the classroom behavior rules of the regular teacher. If the regular teacher's

rules have not been made available to you, establish your own. Make your statement concerning rules short, succinct and realistic. Nothing erodes classroom management faster than rules and threats that the teacher does not, or cannot, enforce.

## B. Erasing Classroom Management

Perhaps you have already developed your own management style. Perhaps you are still searching for a style with which you feel comfortable. Examining the following principles could ease management problems:

1. Act – don't react. Good discipline is the result of good management, which includes being prepared and anticipating student needs.
2. Minimize the unexpected. Good discipline comes from minimizing the unexpected by being well prepared and anticipating students' needs. You had better expect the unexpected if you sit behind the desk while the students complete individual assignments. Minimize the unexpected by being an active part of their "time on task". Move around the room looking for students who need encouragement or help, and be ready with a word of praise for those who are working.

The unexpected may come in the form of an inadequate lesson plan. But, if you are equipped with additional activities you will minimize the unexpected.

3. Handling of severe discipline problems. Though you may do all to minimize the unexpected, there are occasions when the behavior of a student so disrupts the learning of others that drastic measures must be taken. Students may be sent to the principal's office or, in the case of the small school, a telephone call can be made to the school board chairperson or parent. A follow-up referral to the principal or teacher should be completed and turned in as soon as practicable.
4. Reject anonymity. It is important for classroom management that you have some method of identifying students by name. You may need to walk around the room with seating chart in hand.
5. Begin class work immediately. After worship, begin class work immediately. It is easier to maintain control if it is achieved from the beginning of the day. If you need time to take roll, orient

yourself, etc., have a simple task written on the board which will give you a "breathing spell".

6. Keep activities moving. You will develop an internal time clock which tells you that it is time for the students to move into a different activity or take a different approach to learning a concept. When a number of students are not "on task" you should expect the unexpected.

### C. Verifying Success

As you become experienced and more at ease with the variety of situations in which you find yourself, you may want to verify that you are, indeed, helping students in the learning process. The regular teacher relies on short-term quizzes, long-term tests and a variety of written assignments to establish student growth. Long-term substitutes will rely on these same evaluation techniques to evaluate their teaching methods.

## SUBSTITUTING DO'S AND DON'T'S

This list has been compiled based on actual reports received regarding substitutes' actions and behavior. Please consider each point and act accordingly.

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DO'S	DON'T'S
1. Always follow the teacher's lesson plan if humanly possible. Be sure to explain in your wrap-up notes why you could not complete any part of the plan.	1. While you may have a pet message you'd like to share with students, do not use your substitute exposure for that purpose.
2. Always leave a complete written report of the day's accomplishments, problems or concerns for the teacher.	2. A note saying, "Everything went fine," does not tell the teacher anything that is unacceptable.
3. Take accurate roll.	3. If teacher has students assigned to take roll, be sure to double check for accuracy.



4. If you need assistance, ask for it. It is not a sign of weakness to say "Help".
5. Be friendly, but firm. In most cases you will only be there one day, and the students need to know who is in charge.
6. Be prepared to fulfill the entire substitute assignment. If you realize that you will not be able to do so – don't accept the assignment for that day.
7. Always carry some back up lesson plans in case there are none when you arrive. Let the principal know you had to wing it.
8. Insist that students address you by your last name. Write your name on the chalkboard when you arrive.
9. Dress with pride and care regardless of the assignment. First impressions are lasting.
10. Be consistent in your behavior expectations.
4. Don't make the mistake of thinking you are invincible and can handle every situation. Even the most seasoned teacher needs help some time.
5. Don't plan to do your knitting or catch up on your reading while substituting. You are expected to supervise and teach.
6. Don't ignore dangerous situations. If you notice items that need repair, mention them to the office.
7. Don't use sarcasm as a disciplinary tool. Students like adults, want to be treated with dignity.
8. Try not to let any frustration you are experiencing affect your attitude toward students
9. Keep your personal problems to yourself.
10. Don't expect one level of behavior from one group that you don't expect from all.

## 104 WAYS TO SAY "VERY GOOD"!

1. You're on the right track!
2. You're doing a good job!
3. Now you've figured it out.
4. Now you have the hang of it!
5. You're really going to town!
6. Now you have it!
7. That's coming along nicely.
8. You did it that time!
9. FANTASTIC!!!!
10. Good for you!
11. GOOD WORK!
12. EXCELLENT!!!
13. Good job, \_\_\_\_\_.
14. Good going.
15. That's really nice, \_\_\_\_\_.
16. Keep up the great work!
17. You're leading the pack today!
18. Good thinking!!
19. SUPER!!
20. You made it look so easy.
21. You're doing so much better today.
22. Super self-control!
23. You're getting better every day!
24. I knew you could do it!
25. You're really working hard today.
26. That's the way to do it.
27. I'm proud of you!
28. You are very good at \_\_\_\_\_.
29. THAT'S IT!
30. You've just about got it!
31. I'm happy to see you working like that.
32. That's the best way to do it!
33. That's better than ever!
34. That kind of work makes me happy.
35. Now you've figured it out.
36. FINE!!!!
37. SUPER DUPER!!!
38. You figured that out fast!
39. You're really improving
40. Well, look at you go.
41. TREMENDOUS!!
42. You did that very well.
43. CONGRATULATIONS!!
44. RIGHT ON!!
45. That's the best ever!!
46. You haven't missed a thing.
47. You really make my job fun!!
48. You've just about mastered that!
49. You must have been practicing.
50. That's clever!
51. You're really \_\_\_\_\_.
52. I like the way you \_\_\_\_\_.
53. You've got it made!
54. You did a lot of work today!
55. That's RIGHT!!
56. That's the way!
57. You're doing fine!
58. Nice going.
59. That's great.
60. GREAT!!!!
61. TERRIFIC!!!
62. You out did yourself today.
63. That's better
64. Great rule follower!
65. That's the best you've ever done.
66. Keep it up.
67. WOW!!
68. Much better this time!
69. That's very much better!
70. Exactly right!
71. Give yourself a hug! (pat on the back)
72. I've never seen anyone do it better.
73. Way to go!
74. SUPERB!!!!
75. WONDERFUL!!
76. Keep working on it, you're getting better.
77. You're doing beautifully!
78. Keep on trying.
79. Nothing can stop you now!
80. You are learning so quickly!
81. You certainly did well that time.
82. You made an excellent choice.
83. I'm proud of the way you worked today!
84. You're really learning a lot.
85. That's quite an improvement.
86. MARVELOUS!!!!
87. PERFECT!!!!
88. You've got your brain in gear today!
89. That's IT!!
90. You remembered!!
91. I think you've got it now!
92. You've got that down pat!
93. OUTSTANDING!!
94. Couldn't have done it better myself.
95. That's what I call a fine job!
96. That was first class work!
97. SENSATIONAL!!
98. Good remembering!!
99. It's a pleasure to teach when you \_\_\_\_\_.
100. Congratulations! \_\_\_\_\_right!
101. One more time and you'll have it!
102. That's interesting
103. Fine answer!
104. EXACTLY!!