



CORE SOLUTIONS
EDUCATION SERVICES

Creative Options + Resources in Education

Classroom Management for Substitute Teachers

Adapted from TeachHub.com

Author: Janelle Cox

Review Classroom Expectations, Discipline Plan

The half hour or so that you must arrive at school is mandatory for a reason. Use this time to familiarize yourself with the classroom rules, procedures, and discipline plan. The regular teacher has taken the time to teach these students these rules, so it is your job to reinforce them. If you want to add on to these rules, that is OK, as long as it doesn't confuse the students.

Set the Tone by Taking Control

Children know from the second that you enter the classroom if you are a pushover or can try and push the limits with you. If you are not confident and show any kind of weakness, then you are in for a very long day. If something doesn't go as planned, don't fret: Pretend it was supposed to happen that way, or better yet pull out an activity that you brought with you just in case this kind of thing happened.

You are not Their Friend

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 to 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 Lose Your Temper

Keep your cool in all situations. Do not raise your voice and yell at any time. Think of subbing like a job interview: There is always someone watching you to see how you behave and handle every situation that is thrown at you. If a problem does arise, handle it with kid gloves and quietly pull the student aside and talk to them quietly and calmly.

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.

Note: Some schools may allow candy or other types of tangible rewards for good behavior and being on task. Always make sure to ask whomever it is you report to in the beginning. It may also be a good idea to have those types of items in your SubSurvival kit just in case. Try not to use the classroom's rewards/snacks, etc. unless it has been made clear in the sub plans.

Make Transitions Smooth

One of the hardest times of the day for a substitute teacher is during transition periods like lunch, specials, or in-between activities. This is when students to get noisy and the teacher finds her/himself unable to manage the classroom. If the classroom teacher does not have an attention signal, then make sure you state what yours is first thing in the morning. For younger students, choose a fun phrase, such as: “When I say macaroni and cheese, you say everybody freeze,” or “When I say one, two, three, you say all eyes on me.” For older students, you can use nonverbal cues, such as raising your hand for students to give you five, or ringing a bell or timer. Practice these cues several times so students can learn them quickly.

Note: Modeling expectations is the best way to get students to learn what is expected.

Keep Students Busy

When students have nothing to do, that is when the classroom becomes utter chaos, and you will have a hard time managing it. If a lesson ends early, try a quick five-minute filler like any of these:

- Challenge students to name five alike things (flavors of ice cream, types of automobiles).
- Invite students to think of 5, 10 or 15 things that are found on a farm, a zoo, or school.
- Teach students a few signs or words from a different language.
- Play “Guess Who”: Describe a student and see if they can guess who are talking about.
- Read a headline from the newspaper or a title of a book and have students try to guess what it is about.

Finally, substitute teaching can be a very rewarding experience. This is the time when you learn what you like and want for your own classroom. Make sure not to sweat the small stuff.

Notes:

Notes

Notes

