

**Conroe ISD**  
**2019-20**  
**Substitute Handbook**

**Classroom Management**  
**Supplemental**



**CONROE**  
INDEPENDENT  
SCHOOL DISTRICT

## SUBSTITUTING IN CONROE ISD

Conroe ISD is a community of individuals working together to achieve the best for students. The District is proud of the accomplishments of the students, teachers, administrators, and community who have helped make it a great place to be!

Here we address, in detail, some key principles of successful classroom management, as well as providing specific tips to help in making the tough decisions that substitutes are faced with daily. There is not one "true" recipe that guarantees a good day, but these guiding principles are beneficial. With experience, you will devise your own strategies for gaining students' cooperation.

Your efforts to be early, organized, and to effectively communicate are the foundation for a successful day! Your goal as a substitute teacher is to provide continuity to the students while the teacher is absent. By minimizing idle time, you can maximize the time spent on learning.

### PREPARING FOR CLASS/DAY

- Arrive at your assigned school at least 20-30 minutes before class begins.
- Check in at the office.
- Review the teacher's plans for the day. Find the materials needed for the day, including schedules, class rosters, books, handouts, etc.
- Print your name on the board so students have a visual reference.
- Familiarize yourself with the rules. If there are no classroom rules posted or left by the teacher, consult with a neighboring teacher for assistance.
- Familiarize yourself with the classroom and where things are located (restroom/hall passes, bandages, supplies, etc.).
- Meet the grade leader and/or the teacher next door.
- It is helpful and reassuring to students to be standing at the door greeting them as they enter the classroom.

### STARTING THE CLASS/DAY

- Introduce yourself as the teacher.
- Teach the Attention Signal for the day (**for more information on Attention Signal, see the Resources section**).
- Review the class rules as well as your own expectations.
- Write the plan for the day on the board and review it with the class.
- Start a warm-up activity.
- Take attendance while they complete the warm-up activity.
- Submit attendance and continue on with the remainder of the day or class.

## TEACHING THE CLASS/DAY

- Following a set schedule is important to teaching. Be sure to consider the campus schedule for the length of periods and carefully determine how much time students have to complete each task. Be sure to circulate and scan the room while students are working independently. Students are more likely to behave appropriately if you are monitoring them.
- If students are off task it may be because they do not understand the assignment. A great tip is to ask in a friendly manner, “May I help you get started on that?”
- Students who are on task and following classroom rules should receive age-appropriate positive feedback (**for more on positive feedback, see Resources-Power of 3:1**).
- Be sure to circulate and scan the room while students are working independently. Students are more likely to behave appropriately if you are monitoring them.
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## ENDING THE CLASS/DAY

- Use your attention signal to alert the students it is time to end.
- Communicate your wrap up expectations.
- Leave the work and teacher note together in a clear area for the teacher to see.

## BEST PRACTICES FOR A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

- Be neat and professional in your appearance. This communicates to the students that you are a professional adult and are capable of teaching/leading the class.
- Ask questions when you check in with the front office for the day. This is a good time to find out about any scheduled activities that might be taking place, campus common area expectations that exist, drills that may occur, students in need of extra help, etc.
- Learn what various emergency procedures exist for the building and how they apply to your room and location. You must know how to respond if an alarm is sounded. Find out if the campus uses emergency backpacks or binders.
- Know the teacher who is next door. Introduce yourself so you can call on someone to answer your questions about schedules or materials for the class. Ask them about various

routines you should be aware of, such as the following: lunchtime, recess, specials, fire drills, etc.

- Be prepared at all times. Read through and understand what the teacher is expecting you to cover. If you are not sure, ask a neighboring teacher. Follow the lesson plan left by the classroom teacher. Consider bringing school supplies (an extra pencil, pen, or notebook paper) in case things go missing or a student forgets their own. In addition, plan extra activities to be ready if students finish the work left for them quicker than expected. For example, bringing an age appropriate book would be helpful to hold an impromptu read-aloud after everyone has completed their work.
- Meeting the students at the door is a good way to set the tone for the day. While you are greeting the students at the door take time to notice the presence, or absence, of an arrival routine. Many teachers spent time early in the year establishing beginning of the class routines and the children will now begin them without much thought. If you notice a class not following a routine, poke your head in and give them 3 - 4 simple arrival tasks to complete while you are greeting other students.
- Describe the plan and schedule of activities for the day to the class. Whatever the plan is, once you state it, stick with it. Firmness, fairness, and consistency are key. If you come across as uncertain or unprepared the students are likely to not take you seriously.
- Reviewing the class rules as well as your expectations communicates that you are there to teach and today will be a normal day. Require students to pay attention and stay on task. Most students will follow your leadership. If a student or class try to challenge the way something is taking place simply acknowledge their concern by saying something like, "I know this may not be the way Mr. Griffin does it, but this is the plan for today."
- Utilize an attention signal. Determine how you will quickly gain the attention of your class in order to speak to them.
- Provide students with specific feedback regarding their behavior throughout the day/class. Feedback tells them how well they are doing and reinforces the importance of each lesson and since you are new to them they may not recognize your unspoken signals.
- Move throughout the classroom and stay visible at all times. Do not sit behind the desk for any length of time. Engage with the students using age-appropriate methods and never leave your students alone or unattended.
- When students need to leave the classroom for one reason or another, send only one student at a time. It is critical that you always know where the students are and what they are doing. It is a good idea to avoid sending students out during the first and last ten minutes of the class.
- Be ready to handle most classroom accidents with common sense. Students who are injured can be taken to the front office where a school nurse can administer first aid but be careful not to fall into the "Band-Aids" or "ice" trap, where students are continually asking to go to the office for ice or Band-Aids for fake injuries. If a student is bleeding have them cover the area themselves with tissues and get them to the nurse without touching the wound yourself. Ask for a custodian if blood dripped in the classroom or along the way to the nurse.
- If there is not a seating chart available, quickly make one. It is much easier to maintain discipline when you can call a student by name. A possible warm-up activity is having the children make name tags or desk tents. One idea is to buy large quantities of stick- on name

tags and carry them with you to your various substitute teaching assignments. Masking tape is another inexpensive option. You can also use 5" by 8" cards that students write their names on, fold in half, and keep on their desks. Also, calling students by name helps them to pay attention to your directions and lets them know that you want to get to know them on a first-name basis.

- It is important to continually reinforce the behavior standards for the day. Address any and all rule violations in a calm, consistent manner. It is difficult to enforce a rule that was allowed earlier in the day (for more information on effective corrections, see the Resources section).
- As you collect student work try to organize it by assignment with paper clips and sticky note labels to assist the teacher when she/he returns. On the sticky note you can make comments such as a student did not finish or if the class finished extremely fast. Unless you are explicitly asked and left with a key, do not grade students' work.
- An incentive program can go a long way. At the start of the day outline your reward system to be used throughout the day. You can bring stickers, a bag of candy, or a gift-wrapped box with a game or book inside that can be used as rewards (for more information on incentive ideas, see the Resources section).
- Have students clean up their workspace and get ready to leave the room. Leaving the room in neat condition is a must, so allow time at the end of the day for proper closure and cleanup.
- Find a clean, clear spot to leave your notes. Clip together any messages to the teacher that need his/her response, and paper clip and stack any work collected. Place your account of the day on top of the stack. In your account, outline what took place for the day. Be sure to describe the assignments and how they went, mention all of the positive things that took place, and any problems he/she needs to address. If there was an issue you handled, you may omit it from the note.

## COMMON SITUATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM

- Below are a few situations you might encounter while substituting with some suggestions on how to respond to them in a calm, positive manner in order to gain student compliance. The scenarios below should only be used as a point of reference as all students/classrooms are different.

### Situation 1: The Interrupter

When asking a question of the class, a student responds without raising his hand for permission to speak or speaks out of turn when a student response is not appropriate.

- Do not respond to the disruptive student. Look positively at those who are raising their hands, calling on one of them saying, "Thank you for raising your hand," as the student proceeds to answer the question.
- If the student continues to speak without raising their hand when you ask the next question, continue to reinforce the students who are behaving appropriately and move closer to the student who is not cooperating. Do not acknowledge the student who is speaking out of turn. If you give in and let that student answer, you are actually reinforcing the inappropriate behavior.

- Generally, the non-compliant student will cooperate and raise their hand. It is important that you call on the student as soon as he/she raises his/her hand, reinforcing them verbally for the appropriate behavior.

### **Situation 2: Refusal to do Work**

After giving an assignment, a student refuses to do his work. When you encourage him to complete the assignment, he makes a statement such as, "You can't make me."

- Disarm the student by agreeing that he is correct and then restate your expectations and consequences if they are not met.
- Check that the student understands what the activity is asking them to do.
- Walk away and allow the student time to comply.

### **Situation 3: Not Following Instructions**

You have outlined an activity as well as the expectations during the work time. Two students are talking and not following your directions.

- Repeat the expectations focusing on the students who are following your directions. "Thank you for following the directions, Susan." Or "I appreciate April and John for following my directions so quickly." You can also give stickers, points, or tickets to students who are following directions.
- It is a good idea to use proximity. In other words, "move toward the student" while you are talking. Move closer to the off-task or non-compliant student(s) while repeating the instructions for the whole class. Your change in proximity to the non-compliant student(s) will generally elicit compliance.

### **Situation 4: Lengthy Transitions**

You find that it is taking more than one or two minutes to make the transition from one activity to the next.

- Students often waste a lot of time going from one activity to another. This is often because instructions that seem simple such as, "Get ready for math," are in reality quite ambiguous. Students need to know five specific things to make a quick transition from one activity to the next:
  - What to do about the activity in which they are currently engaged
  - What to do with the materials they are using
  - What new materials they will need
  - What to do with these new materials
  - How much time they will have to make the transition

### **Situation 5: Refocusing the Class**

The class is not paying attention or resuming their studies after an assembly, fire drill, or other events that disrupt the normal flow of the class.

- Use the disruption as the basis for the next lesson. For example, if it was a fire drill and

you are about to study science, talk about which parts of the school would burn the fastest. If you are about to study math, have students calculate the approximate number of people in each room that would need to be evacuated and the number of transportation vehicles that would be needed for taking everyone home. If you were preparing a writing lesson, have the students write about what would happen if the school really did burn down.

- Sometimes the best way to deal with a disruption is to minimize the event by capturing and redirecting their attention. For example, after an exciting assembly, complete a fun activity that requires them to do something. Involving students in a fun learning activity will help them settle back down to the routine of the day.

## **Situation 6: Inappropriate Language/Derogatory Remarks**

A student uses profanity or makes a derogatory remark.

- Acknowledge that the student chose to break a rule and state the consequence. Try not to take the remarks personally. Keep your cool. Concentrate on dealing professionally with the behavior and not letting your feelings towards the student cause you to get upset. Then dismiss the incident and resume class work as quickly as possible.
- In some situations, it is best to talk privately with the student in a corner of the classroom. Calmly ask the class to continue working, then speak with the student. Stay calm and in control of the situation. State the rule that was broken or explain that their behavior was unacceptable and why. Explain the consequence if the rule is broken a second time. Express your confidence in the student's ability to behave their best, then ask them to go back to their seat and begin their work.

## **SUBSTITUTE RESOURCES**

- Attention signal
- Setting and teaching expectations
- Power of 3:1
- Incentive ideas
- Effective corrections

## **Attention Signals**

Getting and holding students' undivided attention is an important management responsibility for all teachers. If the teacher has not named a specific one he/she uses, we recommend a simple one to use. In a firm but friendly voice, say "May I have your attention please?" while raising your hand in the air. Students may or may not raise their hands, but they should stop talking and look at you within 5 seconds. This attention signal is effective because students can hear it, see it, and you are able to use it no matter your location in the classroom or building. In order for it to work, you should teach it to your students at the beginning of class and have

them practice using it. You should also give students positive feedback when they meet your expectations (ex: “Class, that took 4 seconds for you to stop talking and look up here, excellent job!”).

## Setting and Teaching Expectations

Successful teachers are very clear when it comes to explaining exactly how students should behave during the day. Therefore, it is essential to make your expectations very clear before each activity or transition during the day. This can be as simple as writing your expectation up on the board and teaching it to students before they start an activity. Some questions to consider before an activity or transition:

- **C**onversation: Can student talk during this time? How loud?
- **H**elp: What should students do if they have a question or comment?
- **A**ctivity: What are the directions for the activity?
- **M**ovement: Can students get up to sharpen a pencil, get supplies, use the restroom, etc.?
- **P**articipation: What should the teacher see if students are participating appropriately?

Some teachers use an acronym called **CHAMPs** to help remind them to teach students the expectations beforehand. There may be a poster in the room to assist with this. If not, it is just as effective to just write your expectations on the board and then very clearly teach and explain these to students before they begin a new activity or before they transition to a new location. If students stop following expectations during an activity or transition, simply use your attention signal to get the attention of the class and review the expectations again.

To see a video of this done well, please search click on the link below, or just search YouTube for Whole Group CHAMPs (2-minute video).

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_MwvSe8ye5o](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_MwvSe8ye5o)

## 3:1 Ratio

Try to interact with students three times more when they are doing the right thing than when they are doing the wrong thing. This powerful behavior management strategy is called the 3:1 Ratio. Giving more attention to positive behaviors in the classroom actually increases the likelihood that students will act in positive ways. Some easy ways to increase positive interactions:

- Greet students at the door
- Give positive feedback when students are on task (ex: “Thank you for completing your work.”)
- Give positive feedback when student follow classroom rules and expectations (ex:



“Thank you for following directions.”)

- Smile at students
- Give nonverbal feedback such as head nods and thumbs up

It is important to understand that you must correct misbehavior; misbehavior should not be ignored. However, you should interact more often when students are not misbehaving than when they are. Keep in mind that being genuine is key to building positive relationships with kids.

## Class-wide Motivation Ideas

If you have set clear expectations for students and you still find yourself correcting misbehavior at high rates, you may consider a simple Classwide Motivation System. Below are a few ideas:

- Tell students that if the class stays on task for the class period, they may have the last 5 minutes to talk, draw, listen to music, use their phones, etc.
- Teacher vs. Students: On the board, draw 2 columns with Teacher on one and Students on the other. Every time you catch students doing the right thing (ex: following directions, expectations, responding to attention signal, etc.), you give the Students a point. If they do not respond appropriately, give the Teacher column a point. Let students know ahead of time that if they have more points than you at the end of the day, they may earn an incentive (ex: break at end of class, Brain Break video, positive note to the teacher, anything else available and appropriate for age group). This incentive may be more age appropriate for secondary students.
- Tickets: Cut up small pieces of paper to make tickets. Pass these out to individual students when you see them acting in appropriate ways (ex: on task, following directions, etc.). Tell students when they get their ticket they should put their name on them. At the end of the class/day, collect the students in a small container and draw one or more names for an incentive. This incentive may be more age appropriate for elementary students.
  - If you are unsure what to use as incentives or if the teacher has not left anything for you to use as an incentive, ask a neighboring same-grade level teacher if they have any suggestions.

## Effective Corrections

When misbehavior occurs, it is important to correct that behavior. The most effective corrections are direct, brief, and explicit. They should always be delivered in a way that demonstrates respect. We must model respect to students at all times, even if we feel we are not being treated respectfully. The following are tips for effective corrections:

- Maintain instructional flow
  - Correct using as little time as possible.
- Respectful
  - Always use a respectful tone and words.

- Describe the behavior you WANT to see
  - Example: “Please begin working on your assignment,” instead of “Stop playing around.”
- Create the illusion of privacy
  - Move closer to the student you are correcting and lean in slightly when possible.
- Give some response time
  - After correcting a student, walk away and give them 15-30 seconds to correct the behavior. Walk back to the student and give positive feedback if the misbehavior was corrected. If the student has not corrected misbehavior, give the correction a second time. We do not want to create a power struggle by staring at a student and waiting for them to comply.

The following is a menu of correction strategies that are appropriate to use:

- Pre-correction – If it’s a situation where you think students might exhibit misbehavior, correct beforehand  
*Example:* “Class, before we get into groups I want to remind everyone to stay on topic about the assignment.”
- Proximity – Standing by the student with misbehavior  
*Example:* If two students are talking, just walk over to where they are while continuing to teach.
- Gentle Verbal Reprimand – Tell student what they are expected to do in a calm, respectful way  
*Example:* “The expectation during this time is a Voice Level 0.”
- Discussion at a Neutral Time – If a student has not responded to several corrections, give a gentle reprimand immediately and then let the student know you will deal with the disruption after class.  
*Example:* “Student, I’ve asked you to stop talking several times. I will need to see you after class.”)
- Praise Students Behaving Responsibly – Praising other students who are demonstrating the correct behavior.  
*Example:* “Red group, thank you for getting started right away.”
- Restitution – Not a punishment but an attempt to repair any damage made.  
*Example:* If a student makes a mess, ask him/her to rectify it. If a student makes a rude comment to another student, ask him/her what the correct way to say it would have been or to apologize.