

The ABC's of survival

The first weeks in the classroom



Attendance

Learn school procedures and establish expectations early.

Be prepared

Have extra assignments ready for unforeseen circumstances.

Courses of study

Get these in advance. Check often with others teaching the same courses and with your department head.

Discipline

Be realistic, reasonable and consistent.

Expectations

Tell your students right away what you expect—re marks, notebooks, etc.

Flexibility

Schedules may be altered occasionally for assemblies, drills, etc.

Games students play

Be prepared for students to try to “get” the rookie.

Handbook

Read the staff handbook before September 1.
Use a student handbook as a calendar.

Illness

Learn the attendance procedure to use when you get sick.

Journal

Keep a journal of reflective practices.

Keep track

Use colour-coded folders for each class- marking, attendance and handbook.

Literacy skills

All teachers teach literacy skills.

Mentor

Choose a person you can trust to help you and build your confidence.

Names

Use a seating plan right away; students respect teachers who learn their names quickly.

OSSTF/FEESO

Your OSSTF/FEESO rep (branch president) is there to help you; don't hesitate to ask.

Procedures

Know the back-to-school procedures so your first week goes smoothly.

Questions

Don't be afraid to ask—we were all beginners once.

Relax

Build in time for family, friends, leisure and exercise.

Sense of humour

Don't leave home without it.

Tour the school

Learn the layout before school starts.

Unwritten rules exist

Find out what they are for your school.

Visual aids

Find out where equipment is kept and who is in charge.

Who's really in charge

Get to know the very helpful support staff.

Xerox

The photocopier is a useful tool. Learn where it is and how to use it.

Your collective agreement

Get a copy and read it.

Zeal

Enthusiasm is contagious!



OSSTF/FEESO

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OSSTF/FEESO, founded in 1919, has 60,000 members across Ontario. They include public high school teachers, occasional teachers, educational assistants, continuing education teachers and instructors, psychologists, secretaries, speech-language pathologists, social workers, plant support personnel, attendance counsellors, and many others in education.