Welcome back to all new and returning substitute teachers to VUSD! The Subway is a monthly newsletter for all of our substitute teachers. We hope that you find useful information that will support all of your work with students, faculty, and the community.

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Welcome Back!

Let’s face it. Subbing is not easy. Even if you are an experienced, certificated teacher, it can be difficult to step into a strange classroom and expect to have a smooth day. And if the groundwork has not been laid for you to be there, it can be even more difficult. However, there are some strategies you can use to be successful.

1) Arrive early.
This gives you time to find the classroom, locate the lesson plans and materials, and introduce yourself to a neighboring teacher.

2) Chunk the day.
Start by reading through all of the lesson plans and look for breaks (lunch, recess, etc.). I go back and closely study the lessons for the first chunk of the day, looking over teacher materials. At the breaks, I will do the same for the next chunk of the day and so on.

3) Don’t assume anything.
First thing in the morning, you need to introduce yourself, making sure the students know your name and expectations.

4) Have a reward system.
I always carry my own reward system, but I don’t always use it. It truly depends on the class. I use a punch system, but you can use anything you find convenient. I hand out sticky notes to each student. Then when I see students on task, I use my cute little frog hole puncher to give a punch to their note. At the end of the day, I reward the top group of students with the most punches by letting them choose from my treasure box.

5) Come prepared for the just-in-case.
It happens plenty. Either the lesson plans don’t take up the whole time allotted, or you discover there are no lesson plans. Come prepared with a few things of your own. I always have at least one picture book that I know I could do a reading or language arts activity with. I also tend to carry graphic organizers since they can be adapted to any grade and subject. Busy students cause fewer problems.

6) Use your allies.
Remember that other teachers around you are your allies and will support you throughout the day.

7) Use interesting teaching strategies.
Even the best lessons and classroom management will go awry if all you do is drone at the front of the class. Using interesting teaching strategies such as cooperative learning, hands-on learning, and engaged storytelling as much as you can will keep teaching interesting and students paying attention.

The Substitute Teacher Bag of Tricks

Every substitute teacher should have their own bag of tricks. It is the one substitute teacher trick that will almost guarantee a great day for you and for your students. No matter what grade or subject you are substituting for, the following items should always be in your bag of tricks.

1. Pens and Pencils – While every classroom has writing utensils stored somewhere, it is best to have these on hand and ready to go. Who knows where the regular teacher stores them or if the teacher locks them up in a cabinet for which you have no key. Students are notorious for not having a pencil and you can’t effectively teach if your students aren’t able to complete their work.

2. Paper – Keep both lined and blank paper on hand. This is another item students frequently run out of or forget at home. Having paper on hand also allows you to make notes about the classroom for both yourself and for the regular teacher. The teacher you are substituting for wants to know how your day went. Don’t forget to leave a note!

3. Sticky Notes – These are great to have on hand for both quick notes you don’t want to forget and to help keep papers organized. A quick sticky note on top of second period’s papers and then third period’s papers will help their teacher when she comes back to school.

4. Stickers/Rewards – Stickers are not just for the elementary school students. Even high schoolers will enjoy a sticker for a job well done. Catch a student on task? Put a sticker on the top of their work. It will bring a smile to the student and allow the teacher to know exactly who was on task and who wasn’t. Check your local dollar store for inexpensive and fun stickers. You could also stock up on cool pens, erasers, or toys to use as rewards if you’d like.

5. Substitute Binder – A substitute binder is a lifesaver when a teacher has not left any plans for her classroom. Keep it stocked with master copies of word searches, mandala coloring sheets, crossword puzzles and other worksheets for each grade and subject you typically teach. If you find yourself with extra time at the end of the class having copies of these on hand will keep your students busy and out of trouble.

6. Planner and Business Cards – Having your planner and business cards on hand is the best way to show other teachers, and the administration, that you are ready and prepared to take on more substituting assignments. Leave a few of your business cards with your classroom notes for the current teacher. Don’t be shy about handing them out to teachers on the same hallway, leaving them with the secretary or putting a few in the teacher’s lounge. A great substitute is always needed and if your business card is in front of other teachers they will think of you when they need to miss a day.

Being a great substitute teacher is all about preparation.

“All students can learn and succeed, but not on the same day in the same way.”
— William G. Spady
SUBSTITUTE PLACEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM
(SMARTFIND EXPRESS) - Updating your Profile

Please be sure to update personal information as needed. If you have any questions on using the SmartFind Express, please contact Laura Lemly:
lauralemly@vistausd.org
(760)726-2170, ext. 92207

To Update Information on SmartFind Express please:

Sign In:
Open your browser and access the SmartFind Express Sign in page. Enter your Access ID and PIN.

Updating Your Profile:
Information—Review your profile status and address information
Update Email—Enter or change your email address.
Callback Number—View or update your callback number. Please specify a Do Not Call time.
Change Password: Enter your current PIN followed by a new PIN twice and then click Save.

NEW Attendance Procedures

There are new procedures for checking in to all sites this year. Timesheets will no longer be used.

Important updates:

- Please Check in with school/department secretary as assigned by Smart Find Express (SFE)
- School Secretary will have a sign in log sheet for you to sign
- Sign out at the end of the day
- Track jobs on SFE and verify that each job you work has been created for you on your calendar “Review Assignments”
- At the end of each day, the secretary will put the absence or vacancy in Digital Schools and put your time in as the assigned substitute.

The Subway Challenge

Here are a few questions regarding substitute procedures. Let’s see how you do. The answers are on the next page.

1. How many hours constitute a half day assignment? How many hours constitute a full day assignment?

2. What is a Long Term Substitute teacher rate? How many days do I have to work in order to receive that rate?

3. How do I renew my credential?

4. Why do I have to do the mandated re-

5. How many days of sick leave do I get? How do I use the sick leave?
VUSD Beliefs

We believe that...

All students have a unique capacity to learn.

Risk taking, effort and perseverance lead to excellence and innovation.

Individuals learn and work best in a safe, nurturing environment.

Important Dates—September

September 3  Labor Day—No School
September 8  K-8 Professional Development Day (Minimum Day Schedule)

Important Vista Unified School District Phone Numbers

District Office Main Line: (760) 726-2170
HR Department Fax: (760) 631-4537
Benefits, ext. 92206
Human Relations, ext. 92200
Payroll, ext. 92602
Substitute Desk, ext. 92207
Sub system by phone (760) 726-1379
SFE on the web: https://vistausd.eschoolsolutions.com

Subway Challenge: Answers

How did you do?

1.  A full day substitute teaching assignment is 4 or more hours a day. Anything less than 4 hours constitutes a half day assignment.

2.  The Long Term Substitute Teacher rate is $139 starting on the 11th day in the same assignment.

3.  Renew your credential at www.ctc.ca.gov. Once you are at the site, you will click on the following buttons: renew your document, renew your document online, and create user Id and password. You will then be able to click on the appropriate credential available for renewal.

4.  All employees, both certificated and classified, are required to complete a mandated reporter training each year. You can complete it at vusd-keenan.safeschools.com/login.

5.  You will receive 3 paid sick days a year. Please cancel any sub job in SFE as soon as you know that you are unable to teach due to an illness. Contact the School Secretary to report your illness in Digital Schools. If you decline a job using code 3 contact Laura Lemly by email to report your absence in Digital.