



## Advice to ETFO Occasional Employees

Being an occasional employee in the school system is a very unique and special role. The relationships developed with students will be different than the relationships experienced as permanent or long-term employees and is no less important or valuable. The school system could not function without occasional employees. This bulletin is designed to help occasional members be as successful as possible. The advice outlined is intended to be supportive of this unique, demanding and flexible profession.

### Tips for Occasional Members

As an employee of a district school board or school authority and as a member of your ETFO local, members are covered by the terms of both the central collective agreement and the local collective agreement.

This important information is for recent graduates, seasoned occasional teachers and formerly permanent teachers who have begun “supply work.” Employees transitioning from permanent work to occasional work may wish to seek some additional training specifically targeted toward occasional employees to gain a better understanding of the differences in the approach needed toward things such as relationships and classroom management.

It is important to maintain the continuity of the classroom teacher’s academic program. While professional judgement may be exercised to modify plans if necessary, following plans as closely as possible is important. However, there may be times where it is not possible to implement the planned lessons for that day. There may not be any lesson plans if the absence was unexpected. Having some prepared activities to rely on when day plans are not available or when a planned lesson does not fill the time allotted would be helpful.

### At the start of the day

- Check in at the office to announce your arrival and try to introduce yourself to the office administrators and the administration if you are new to the school.
- Pick up keys to the classroom. Some schools also have information binders.
- Find the daybook or plans and prepare for the day.
- Ask about student safety or behaviour plans and review them to ensure consistency for those students involved.
- Identify the names of students with high needs, allergies and those requiring medications.
- Perform any tasks necessary to execute the lessons (e.g., photocopying, cutting, reading information in a textbook, room and activity set-up).
- Find the seating plan if applicable. Making one may be helpful if one is not left.
- Familiarize yourself with school safety routines (e.g., fire drills, school timetable, yard duty supervision schedule and school discipline policy).
- Review the in-school support program timetable, if applicable (e.g., Special Education, ELL).
- Find out if anything needs to be collected from the students (e.g., money, homework).
- Find out if there are any special events happening in the school (e.g., pizza day, special visitor, assembly).



### **Consistency in the Classroom**

Make every effort to follow the rules and routines as closely as possible to maintain consistency for the students. If a temporary rule becomes necessary, provide the students with an explanation for its need. Students are more likely to adhere to a new rule when they understand why it is required. Rules should be short, concise and stated in a positive manner. It is helpful to write the rule on the board or to post it as a reminder.

The rules and expectations may need to be reviewed several times during the day, especially after high-energy activities such as recess or physical education class.

It is important to make sure all students are present in the class before or after transitions. Taking frequent head counts is advisable.

If additional information is needed after reviewing the daybook, support can be sought from the school office administration. Students are particularly helpful in answering your questions about classroom procedures around attendance, washroom use, collecting money, etc. Helpful students are a valuable resource and will identify themselves quickly. Other teachers in the school can also be a great source of support and guidance. Be sure to use them.

### **Professionalism in the Classroom**

Interaction with students must, at all times, be professional. Interactions should be friendly, but avoid behaving like a “friend.” Act as a role model, not a friend or peer of the students.

Physical contact with a student, even contact intended to comfort an upset student, should be avoided. Any kind of physical contact can potentially raise boundary issues and result in allegations of professional misconduct. Approach verbal interaction with students in a positive and constructive way. Keep the classroom door open for all discussions with students, and take steps to avoid being alone with a student.

All students have the right to be treated fairly and without favouritism. Use encouragement. Be fair, inclusive, positive and balanced in the feedback provided to all students. Avoid singling students out either positively or negatively in ways which may be seen to separate them from their peers.

Extending opportunities broadly creates a climate of inclusion.

### **At the end of the Day**

Classroom teachers and DECE's need to know what happened during their absence and where to start when they return. It is very helpful when a clear and detailed outline of the day is provided. Some things to note:

- Behaviours or unusual events (both positive and negative).
- Any lessons that were not completed.
- Changes made to the schedule/lesson.
- Anecdotal observations on student learning.

Please leave plans and resources where they were found at the beginning of the assignment.

### **Preventing Problems**

First and foremost, be proactive. Preventing discipline problems is easier and more effective than responding to them. When a well-planned, stimulating learning environment is created, most behaviour problems can be avoided. Student behaviour may appear to be more disorderly when an occasional teacher is in the classroom because some students may take advantage of your lack of familiarity with the rules and routines. In other words, they try to test the established limits. Don't be afraid to ask for help from the office.

### **Knowing Your Collective Agreement**

It may identify specific items of information that each school should supply to you. Remember to support the *Collective Agreement* by following its provisions. If in doubt, contact the local.

## Resources

### ***ETFO AQ Course: The Occasional Teacher***

This course will focus on the knowledge and skills necessary to be an effective occasional teacher. It recognizes that occasional teachers may face additional challenges in their professional lives because of the nature of the occasional teaching role.

<http://etfo-aq.ca/?s=occasional+teacher>

### ***I Am the Teacher – Effective Classroom Management for the Occasional Teacher***

Experienced practitioners show you how to establish an effective presence in the classroom and school, connect appropriately with students, and establish routines and procedures. This resource outlines student expectations, classroom and behavior management techniques, and useful instructional practices. To purchase a copy please visit ShopETFO.

[shop.etfo.ca/collections/resources/products/i-am-the-teacher](http://shop.etfo.ca/collections/resources/products/i-am-the-teacher)

### ***The Occasion to Lead: A Resource Guide for Occasional Teachers***

Written by occasional teachers for occasional teachers, *The Occasion to Lead* is a must-have resource that will provide you with hands-on knowledge about everything you would ever want or need to know about our profession. **Note: This resource is no longer available on the ETFO website.** You can request the resource by going to the Ontario Teachers Federation (OTF) website <https://www.otffeo.on.ca/en/contact/>

### ***The Heart and Art of Teaching and Learning***

*The Heart and Art of Teaching and Learning* is a book that is full of practical tips for beginning teachers on: setting up your classroom, classroom management, building inclusion, working with parents, meeting diverse learning needs and occasional teaching.

[heartandart.ca](http://heartandart.ca)

### ***A Member's Guide to Employment Insurance***

This resource addresses several issues pertaining to employment insurance.

[etfo.ca/supportingmembers/employees/pages/ei.aspx](http://etfo.ca/supportingmembers/employees/pages/ei.aspx)

### ***ETFO Professional Judgement Matters: The Occasional Teacher Evaluation***

Professional judgement guidelines for the occasional teacher evaluation and the teacher performance appraisal outlines the scope with which members can utilize their professional judgement during the evaluation and appraisal process.

[etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Professionals/PJdocs/PJM-TPA.pdf](http://etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Professionals/PJdocs/PJM-TPA.pdf)

### ***ETFO Professional Relations Matters Bulletin Volume 99: Occasional Teacher Evaluation Process***

This document was designed as a guide for school boards to develop an evaluation process for long-term occasional teachers (LTOs).

<http://www.etfo.ca/SupportingMembers/Employees/PDF%20Versions/Occasional%20Teacher%20Evaluation%20Process.pdf>

### ***ETFO Occasional Teacher Website***

Whatever your assignment or role as an occasional teacher this ETFO site can support you with resources, tips and tools, and classroom experiences. From a quick work sheet to a long-term plan, you'll find it here.

[etfo-ots.ca](http://etfo-ots.ca)

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