

Before the Big Day

Visit the school before the official starting day to familiarise yourself with it. This is a chance to meet some staff members and better understand the school's culture.

Get a class roll: Familiarise yourself with your student's names and basic information, such as medical history.

Connect with the subject leader: They can and should provide guidance, share insights about the curriculum and expectations, and offer support when needed.

Familiarise yourself with school policies and procedures, including toilet procedures, movement pass requirements, and inappropriate behaviour procedures.

How to handle student sickness: Once you get the students list, check the medical history of the individual students. Inquire about the school's protocol for handling student illness or emergencies.

Maintain flexibility: Each day can bring unexpected challenges or changes. Be mentally prepared for last-minute changes or challenges.

Bring essentials such as snacks and water. Make sure you keep hydrated. Also, even though it may sound weird, bring an extra shirt and mints.

Teachers' attitudes and mindsets matter

Being prepared for your classes and organising your materials can reduce stress. Plan your lessons in advance, and ensure your materials are easily accessible.

Hectic mornings: Arriving early to school can give you time to settle in and mentally prepare for the day. If you need to print materials, try to do it before the day you need them.

Be a role model: Your behaviour and appearance serve as examples to your students, and you dress appropriately and professionally. Be aware of your behaviour on social media.

Maintain a positive and enthusiastic attitude: Approach your classes with a genuine positive attitude and show authentic enthusiasm.

Get to know your students: Take the time to build relationships with your students. Learn their names as early as possible and try to pronounce them correctly.

Provide opportunities for student voice: Ask students for their input on activities or allow them to contribute ideas and suggestions for classroom routines, rules, and expectations.

Focus on managing content, not students: Shift your mindset from managing students to managing the content and learning environment.

Patience, listening and negotiation

Patience: Be patient when answering questions, addressing concerns, or providing feedback.

Avoid rushing or becoming frustrated if students require additional support or repetition.

Listening skills: Students who feel heard and understood are more likely to engage and participate in class.

Negotiating: When conflicts arise, allow students to express their perspectives, preferences, and concerns, considering their viewpoints.

Setting up the classroom

Assigned seating helps establish a sense of order and structure. Using assigned seating as a temporary tool to help remember students' names can be a helpful practice.

Consider student needs, such as learning styles and preferences. Some students may benefit from sitting closer to the front for better visibility, while others prefer sitting in the back.

Group work and collaboration: Create spaces that enable group work, discussion, peer learning and collaboration, e.g., working stations.

Classroom management: Keep in mind the visibility and accessibility you need to effectively manage the classroom. Ensure that the arrangement allows you to monitor and engage with all students easily.

Prepared for the lesson

Extra activities for more able students: It can help keep them engaged and prevent boredom. Provide opportunities for them to pursue their interests and showcase their talents.

Choosing suitable colours: Consider the readability and emotional impact of colours when using them in your teaching materials.

Overhead and board preparation: Preparing materials in advance helps streamline the lesson. Visual aids can enhance students' understanding and retention of the content.

Avoid turning your back for extended periods while writing, as it can create a disengaging environment and make it challenging to monitor students' behaviour or address.

Classroom Expectations

Being firm but fair: Establishing clear expectations and consistent rules in the classroom is important for maintaining a productive learning environment.

Respect for each other: Encourage students to listen when others speak, value diverse opinions, and avoid any form of bullying, teasing, or discrimination.

Prompt arrival and preparedness: Stress the significance of arriving to class on time and being prepared with the necessary materials.

Participating in class: Encourage students to contribute their ideas, ask questions, and engage in class discussions constructively.

Personal responsibility: Communicate the importance of personal responsibility for their learning and behaviour.

Classroom management – dealing with disruption

Expectations and consequences: Set clear expectations and consequences for classroom behaviour and regularly remind students of these expectations. Consistency is the key.

Moving around while instructing: By circulating the room, you can monitor their progress, prevent misbehaviour, and provide support when needed.

Non-verbal cues: You can use non-verbal cues to redirect their attention, such as pausing, making eye contact with the talking students and gesturing for them to quiet down.

Proximity: Move closer to the students talking while continuing to teach. You may naturally grab their attention by physically being closer to them and discourage disruptions.

Address underlying issues: If you notice persistent disruptions or a pattern of students talking during lessons, take the time to understand the underlying reasons.

Seek assistance if necessary: If you feel that a situation is getting out of control or that you or other students are at risk, do not hesitate to ask for assistance.

Document incidents: Keep a record of disruptive incidents in the classroom. Include the date, time, and details of the incident.

Not personal: Disruptive behaviour often reflects the student's individual challenges, circumstances, or needs rather than a personal attack on you.

Managing class is the most crucial skill: If you cannot manage your class, you cannot teach.

Self-Care

Protecting your voice: It is crucial for teachers to protect their voices.

Be kind to yourself: You are human, and it is okay to make mistakes.

Seek support from colleagues: Do not hesitate to ask for help or guidance from your colleagues, someone who understands the significance and challenges of teaching.

Manage worries and stress: Consider techniques like mindfulness and deep breathing exercises to help reduce stress and bring a sense of calmness.

Create boundaries: Try to set boundaries between your personal and professional life.

“It takes a whole village to raise a child”



Saha Bajraktarevic grew up in Bosnia and Hercegovina. When she was 22, she had to leave her hometown and find refuge in Germany, where she lived for six years. She has been living in Australia since 1998.

After finishing her Bachelor's in Mathematical and Computer Modelling, she was unable to find a job. So, she bought a cleaning franchise to earn money and get some work experience in Australia. As the faith wanted it, she had two contracts at school. That is when one of the Principals encouraged her to go back to university and pursue a Graduate Diploma in Teaching.

Two years later, Saha became permanent with the Department of Education as a high school mathematics teacher and, years later, the head of the Mathematics Department.

Her passion for teaching and the scholarship from the Department of Education led her to do a master's degree in Education.

Currently, she is pursuing PhD in Education.

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