



*Frederick County  
Public Schools*

# Substitute Guidelines



Frederick County Public Schools

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# Substitute Information Guide

## Introduction

Welcome to Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS). Each year our substitutes play an important role in our school system by ensuring that the educational process continues even during the absence of the assigned teacher. In order to provide professional, quality instruction our teacher substitutes must know our processes, procedures, and the expectations we have regarding their work and interactions with students. This document serves as a guide to the substitute in establishing communication and expectation levels between the substitute, other employees and the school division. All information is reviewed in detail in our substitute orientation video. Questions regarding assignments or difficulties experienced in a school should be addressed with the school administrator first. Please note that we cannot guarantee that you will receive assignments or how often you will receive them; this is in no way an employment agreement.

## Responsibilities of a Substitute

### Punctuality/Attendance

You are expected to arrive at your assigned school prior to the start of school in order to prepare for the arrival of students and the start of class. If you have accepted an assignment, you are expected to fulfill your job. In the event of an emergency, you must notify the school as soon as possible. Frequent cancellations or late arrivals may lead to removal from our substitute call list.

- Hours for jobs will be provided via the SmartFind call system or the website.
- Plan to arrive approximately 15 minutes earlier than your scheduled start time; punctuality is important. Late arrival to a school may lead to removal from the substitute list.
- Upon your arrival to school, check in with a secretary at the main office to receive a substitute badge and specific instructions. Be sure to sign out at the end of your day and return the badge.

### Professional Conduct

- Core Character Traits and Portrait of a Graduate

The Code of Virginia requires the establishment of a character education program in all public schools for all grades in the Commonwealth. The purpose of character education programs is to instill civic virtues and personal character traits in students so as to improve the learning environment, promote student achievement, reduce disciplinary problems, and

develop civic-minded students of high character. You are expected to model the following Core Character Traits established by FCPS: Respect, Integrity, Citizenship, Honesty, Empathy, Caring, and Responsibility. These are reviewed during substitute orientation and are available at all schools.

In addition to the core character traits, the FCPS Portrait of a Graduate was developed by a group of parents, students, business/community leaders and school staff. It represents the competencies needed for students to be successful and “life ready.” These competencies are also the standard for all FCPS employees.

- **Tobacco Use**

In accordance with FCPS Policy 624P, all school property and buildings are tobacco and nicotine, vapor-free environments. The use or distribution of these products on a school bus; on school property; at an on-site or off-site school-sponsored activity; or in any vehicle used by the division to transport students, staff, visitors or other persons is prohibited

- **Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace**

In accordance with FCPS Regulation 562R, Frederick County Public Schools is committed to the safety and well-being of our staff and students. In furtherance of the commitment of FCPS to an alcohol and drug-free work environment, all employees are absolutely prohibited from manufacturing, selling, distributing, dispensing, possessing, using, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol in the workplace.

- **Sexual Harassment/Discrimination**

In accordance with FCPS Policy 506P and 429P, the School Board of Frederick County is committed to maintaining an educational environment and workplace that is free from sexual harassment and other unlawful forms of harassment based on: Race, color, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, political affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, disabilities, military status, genetic information, marital status, pregnancy, child birth or related medical conditions, or any other characteristics protected by law or FCPS Policy.

It is a violation of policy for any student or employee to engage in, or tolerate, prohibited harassment at school or any school sponsored activity. It is also a violation of policy for any student or school personnel to retaliate against anyone who files a complaint of prohibited harassment.

- **Maintaining Appropriate and Professional Relationships with Students**

In accordance with FCPS Regulation 567R-D, all employees are expected to maintain courteous and appropriate professional relationships with students. Employees have a responsibility to provide an atmosphere conducive to learning through consistently and fairly applied discipline and the maintenance of appropriate and professional physical and

emotional boundaries with students. FCPS employees are prohibited from dating or engaging in any sexualized behaviors, both of a criminal or non-criminal nature, with any child or student.

Any employee who possesses knowledge or evidence of possible violations of this policy must immediately make a report to their building administrator/department head or the Executive Director of Human Resources. Employees who know or have reasonable cause to suspect child abuse or harassment shall immediately report the suspected violation in accordance with Policy 508P, Personnel- Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting and the Code of Virginia, § 63.2-1509.

- **Electronic Mail, Social Media and Networking**

Use of a cell phone, personal tablet, laptop, or any other personal electronic media is prohibited during work hours. You may not take pictures or videos of students, nor participate in pictures or videos taken by students during work hours.

The use of social networks to interact with students without permission of the school administrator is prohibited. In accordance with FCPS Regulation 567R-B, it is strongly recommended that FCPS employees not use FCPS accounts when establishing email and/or social networking accounts for personal use. In all use of personal social networking sites to which students, parents, FCPS employees and volunteers have access, employees should: maintain appropriate professional boundaries; practice online reputation management; establish appropriate privacy settings; establish social networking relationships with caution; refrain from inappropriate electronic communications with students; recognize that students may not exercise good judgment and may use social media inappropriately; avoid the appearance of impropriety; refrain from posting negative information about students, fellow employees or the division; refrain from uploading inappropriate content; exercise caution when posting links to other Internet or social networking sites; and refrain from posting or sharing content that would be in violation of School Board policies and regulations.

- **Confidentiality/Student Scholastic Records**

Information obtained through your substitute assignment is to be treated as confidential. This includes personal information (school work, grades, behavior, financial standing, medical information, etc.) of a student, family, or staff member. What happens in the classroom is between you, the administrator, the student and his/her parents—do not discuss with others inside or outside of school.

In addition, student scholastic records must be maintained in accordance with FCPS Regulation 416R-A.

- **Attire**

Dress in a professional manner. This will aid in promoting appropriate student-teacher relationships and respect from students. Do not assume you may wear jeans on Fridays or other “casual” days. Clothing shall cover all undergarments, the midriff, cleavage, etc. Sheer and/or see through clothing that exposes these areas is prohibited. Please wear appropriate and safe footwear considering the amount of time you may be walking or standing. Those substitutes working with special education students are advised to wear comfortable clothing; those in P.E. positions may wear the appropriate athletic clothing and shoes.

- **School Computers**

The FCPS wide area network is established solely to support the mission of the school division. Any computer access, if granted to substitutes, must comply with Regulation 567R-A. All users are prohibited from knowingly using FCPS computing resources in such a way that does not promote the instructional program or administrative operations of FCPS. Upon logging into any device employees will need to acknowledge the Acceptable Computer System Use agreement, which states: “This device is the property of Frederick County Public Schools. Unauthorized access to the device is forbidden. Users (authorized or unauthorized) have no explicit or implicit expectations of privacy. By accessing this device, you voluntarily consent to have your actions, email, or other electronic information monitored, recorded, seized and disclosed to authorized personnel as determined by FCPS.”

## **Classroom Management**

It is expected that classroom substitutes possess the training necessary to ensure a safe and productive learning environment. This training may be completed during the successful pursuit of an education degree that includes coursework in classroom management or may be obtained through an online or in person class focused on training substitutes including classroom management. The list below is not meant to be an all-inclusive list of rules and guidelines for teachers to follow, but it should serve as a basic reminder of important expectations.

### **Do not....**

- Use sarcasm or ridicule as a method to control student behavior. This is disrespectful to the student and often results in parental involvement. It also commonly results in a request from the school that you be removed from their substitute list.
- Use humor without a great deal of care. Although it can assist in bonding with students in some situations, establishing a relationship with students using humor can result in hurt feelings or can be perceived as demeaning or mocking. It can often be viewed as disrespect by the student or their parent.
- Record or photograph a student as proof of their actions. If a behavior is inappropriate, get an administrator who can address this.

- Leave students unattended—ever. It takes only a minute of unsupervised time for a student to become injured or for other unacceptable behaviors to occur. You also cannot be distracted from giving your full attention to the students for purposes of resting your eyes, sleeping, or performing work other than that assigned by the school. You will be held responsible for actions resulting from a lack of supervision.
- Touch, hit, or restrain students. Remember—corporal punishment is not permitted or acceptable.
- Change the “lesson” into your own idea of what should be shared.
- Engage in interactions with staff, parents, or students, or allow students to engage in, discussions on inappropriate topics. These include, but are not limited to, discussions that are sexual, include references to drugs, personal health, topics that are demeaning or discriminatory toward others, the use of profanity, etc.

### **Remember:**

- Sometimes minor behavior issues can be ignored at first. Students may be asking a neighbor a simple question. If problems persist, start with a positive reminder.
- Proximity is a good strategy. Moving around the room will help keep students involved in the lesson.
- Discuss issues with behavior privately rather than in front of the class. Never degrade or intimidate students.
- Exercise self-control. As the adult in the classroom the substitute is expected to be the authority figure. Treat all students with respect and avoid discussions that contain controversial topics, personal qualities, opinions, or judgments.
- Project a positive attitude and a feeling of self-confidence. If you have a cheerful, confident, enthusiastic approach to substituting, you can provide a rewarding experience for yourself and for the students.
- Check for and review the classroom management plan (rules and consequences).
- Emphasize the positives.
- Inform an administrator of any incidents that could possibly result in a parent calling after you have gone for the day. This will assist the school in having some specific information if and when they deal with the situation.
- Evaluate student cooperation before addressing concerns with student progress. Try to determine if students are responsible or irresponsible by asking yourself some questions; do they know what is expected, do they follow through, or do they disregard direction?

### **Expectations**

- Arrive Early—Arrive at the location with sufficient time to organize your materials and familiarize yourself with rules and procedures.
- Bring a picture ID as all FCPS schools are equipped with the Raptor Identification System.

- Review and abide by the FCPS Health and Safety Plan.
- Report to the location’s main office—Sign in and pick up your substitute badge. Take advantage of available resources, starting with the administrative office at the school/facility. Check with administrators and secretaries to get any general information you will need to know that day. What are your specific duties? Who will supervise you during the day? Do you have additional duties (bus duty, lunchroom supervision, etc.)?
- Familiarize yourself with location emergency procedures. Maintaining a safe environment for our staff and students is a priority. Review the information the school provides you and be sure that you understand procedures and expectations in the event of an emergency.
- You are expected to stay on the school premises. As a substitute you are not permitted to leave the school until your assignment is completed and you have signed out at the office.
- Be flexible. The needs of the school can change before and during an assignment. It is important for a substitute to be willing to perform tasks that they may not have originally signed up to do. An example may be that you could be pulled during planning periods to assist in coverage for another class or hall duty.
- Maintain a professional relationship with administrators, staff, parents, and students. Be respectful of everyone you come in contact with in the course of your sub assignment.
- Evaluate and track students’ work.
- Keep the room in order.
- Follow any written plans provided and maintain discipline in the classroom.
- Student attendance records are vitally important. Keep an accurate record of student attendance for each class. If a student leaves your classroom without permission, call the main office immediately for assistance. Refer to substitute folder for more specific record keeping information.
- Seek assistance from another teacher or administrator if lesson plans are not clear or if students are not being cooperative. Your judgment will be valued more if you choose to ask for assistance versus trying to “suffer through” the problem.
- Always leave a note for the teacher explaining what you accomplished that day and any specific problems you encountered. List positive experiences as well as discipline problems and how they were handled. Students need to know that will be held accountable for their actions.

## **General Information**

### **Pay Information and Schedule**

When you attend an in person orientation session you will complete your direct deposit form and your federal and state tax forms. Paychecks are automatically deposited into your bank account on the last work day of each month. The pay period begins on the second Sunday of each month and ends on the second Saturday of the following month. Specific pay period dates,

cut-off dates, and pay dates are listed on the FCPS website. These are found under the department listing for Finance.

## Systems

- SmartFind Express System

Once approval from the School Board or Assistant Superintendent of Administration is granted you will be sent an email. Included in that email will be the SmartFind Quick Reference Guide. This details the registration process for the system and will assist with answering questions you may have on the system. You will also be given the opportunity to meet with Human Resource to review the guide and how you will receive assignments.

If you are called and unable to substitute, please provide a reason why. If you know there are specific dates that you cannot substitute, make yourself unavailable for those dates in SmartFind Express to avoid receiving calls.

When accepting a substitute assignment, be sure that you have noted which school called, the name of the individual for whom you are subbing, the correct date/times and the job number. Should two substitutes respond for the same sub job, the individual with the job number will receive an assignment.

Any concerns or questions regarding the system, your availability, classifications, or locations, should be addressed with the SmartFind Express operator in Human Resources.

- Employee Payroll Portal

Employee Self Service (ESS) provides an online view of pay statements, deduction details, annual leave, sick leave, personal leave, and W-2 forms. ESS is located on our FCPS website, under the Departments/Finance/Payroll. Instructions for users and frequently asked questions are also available here.

## Inclement Weather

- You can find out if schools are closed or delayed by visiting our [website \(www.frederickcountyschoolsva.net\)](http://www.frederickcountyschoolsva.net). It will also be announced on the radio, Channel 18, television news stations and on our Facebook page. You may also call the following number to get this information: 540-722-6443 or download the FCPS app to view Rapid Communication announcements.
- For a delay, arrive late accordingly—you will still be paid for your assignment. (i.e., if you are expected at 7:45 a.m. and there is a two-hour delay, arrive at 9:45 a.m.).
- If the school is closed, your sub job is cancelled, and you will not be paid for that day.

## **Safety**

You are responsible for becoming familiar with your assigned school's emergency procedures. Review information available in your class; be sure to ask any questions and confirm procedures with office staff or administrators before the start of your day.

Should you experience an injury while working as a substitute, you should notify your school office immediately or as soon as possible considering your responsibility to oversee class activities. If a medical emergency occurs, you should call the office from your class. They will provide you with the number for our Company Nurse Line; it is important that you call them and file a report with them within 24 hours. They will triage the medical concern and provide guidance on your next step.

Should you have questions on how the report is made or the procedures for a worker's compensation claim, you should contact Human Resources.