

STAFFORD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Substitute Instructional Support Staff Handbook



2025-2026

Introduction

This booklet is your guide to success as a substitute support staff in the Stafford Township School District. The contents have been arranged to assist you in finding the answers to many of the questions and problems which may confront you as a substitute in the various schools throughout the system.

Serving as a substitute is one of the most difficult assignments within the school system. It requires the ability to spontaneously walk into any classroom setting – self-contained, physical education, individualized, departmentalized – and carry out the daily activities as would the regularly assigned staff member. Because of the extraordinary expectations and demands, substitute training is imperative. The better prepared, organized and able to carry out the requirements and demands of being a substitute, the greater the possibility of the substitute to be an effective facilitator in the learning process. We hope that this booklet will help facilitate your journey on becoming an effective substitute.

Welcome

Providing the best and highest quality education for our students is our everyday goal. You, as a substitute, are one of the most vital parts of our school's system. It would be extremely difficult for us to operate our schools on a satisfactory basis without you. Having reliable, fully qualified professional substitutes in our schools has always been a high priority for.

We wish to extend to you a most cordial welcome as a substitute staff member. Your daily work is an important contribution to the instructional program of our schools. We feel confident that you will do everything possible to meet the high standards required for teaching in our schools and wish to extend our sincere best wishes as you join our staff.

Please refer to the district website: www.staffordschools.org for up-to-date policies and regulations regarding dress code (Policy #4216) and other information you should familiarize yourself with.



STAFFORD TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Offices
250 N. Main Street
Manahawkin, NJ 08050
609-978-5700

www.staffordschools.org

George J. Chidiac
Superintendent of Schools

Stephanie Bush
Director of Personnel
Ext. 1400

"Set Sail for Success"

Dear Stafford Substitute:

We are very pleased to have you join our family and would like to wish you a successful school year.

Substitutes play an essential role in the education of our students and allow quality instruction of our students to continue when illness or events cause a staff member to be absent. For this reason what you do is critical to each and every one of our students.

I am confident that you understand the importance of your role in guaranteeing the safety of each of our students and we look forward to working with you.

Again, thank you for all you do for our students and have a great year!

Yours in education,

George J. Chidiac
Superintendent

Stafford Township School District

Superintendent of Schools

George J. Chidiac

Central Office Administration

Lourdes LaGuardia, Board Secretary/School Business Administrator

Stephanie Bush, Director of Personnel

Sean Reilly, Director of Special Services

Carolyn Roselli, Vice Principal/Special Education

Schools

Stafford Intermediate

1000 McKinley Avenue

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Principal: Hope Zaun

Vice Principal: Kristin Ducker

Phone: 609-978-5700 X1191

McKinley Avenue Elementary

1000 McKinley Avenue

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Principal: Tiffany Eberle

Vice Principal: Jacqueline Aliseo

Phone: 609-978-5700 X1134

Ocean Acres Elementary

489 Nautilus Drive

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Principal: Susan D'Alessandro

Vice Principal: Christopher DiMicco

Phone: 609-978-5700 X1134

Ronald L. Meinders Primary Learning Center

1000 McKinley Avenue

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Principal: Dawn Reo

Vice Principal: Richard Meyer

Phone: 609-978-5700 X1198

Oxycocus Elementary School

250 North Main Street

Manahawkin, NJ 08050

Director of Early Childhood: William Wilkinson

Phone: 609-978-5700 X1270

Reporting to the School

Arrival time

You should attempt to arrive at the school 30 minutes prior to the beginning of class. The following must be done as soon as you arrive:

- Sign in at the Visitor Station/Main Office
- Stop in the main office for a school map
- or greeter does not apprise you of an unusual school schedule change, be sure to ask.
- Each school has emergency evacuation plans in case of a fire, lock down, or other potentially dangerous situation so that you can successfully evacuate students safely. Know the location of Emergency Response Guide. Also locate the school evacuation map in the classroom. If you cannot find the necessary information, contact the main office.
- Put your personal belongings in a secure place when you arrive

Substitute Teacher Assistant Responsibilities

Under the direction of the classroom teacher:

- Assist in organizing and preparing materials for instruction
- Help to reinforce skills in small groups or with individual students
- Assist student groups in carrying out special assignments
- Assist teacher in producing, collecting, and organizing materials for instruction
- Supervise students in cafeteria, restrooms, hallways, library, and playground
- Assist in keeping room attractive by organizing materials, preparing bulletin boards, and arranging classroom furniture for special purposes

Remember:

- The assistant, as part of the entire staff, is a member of a team. All share responsibility for the school program.
- A warm relationship, established through mutual respect, should exist among students, teachers, and assistants.
- The classroom teacher has the responsibility for planning, instructing, and evaluating.
- Careful planning is necessary to insure harmony and cooperative effort between assistants and teachers. In cases where problems are not solved successfully by the assistant and teacher, the principal will assume leadership.
- The teacher assistant will not replace the teacher as an instructor. The assistant will help by carrying out the plans of the professional. Evaluation of students is the responsibility of the teacher.
- Report all incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying to the teacher and principal in accordance with Policy and Regulation 5512.

Substitute Cafeteria/Playground Aide Responsibilities

- Review health concern list for all classes that you are responsible for.
- During the lunch period you will assist students with purchasing their lunch, opening their lunch, and cleaning the table and floor area after the class has eaten their lunch.
- Outside on the playground you are responsible for monitoring all student activity. All cafeteria assistants should spread out around the perimeter of the playground to monitor all students that are on the playground.
- During “in-days”, cafeteria assistants are responsible for planning activities for students during recess. These activities must include all students.
- You are responsible for the safety of students while serving as a cafeteria assistant.
- Report all incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying to the teacher and principal in accordance with Policy and Regulation 5512.

Substitute Secretary Responsibilities

- When you arrive, you should familiarize yourself with the building map and route sheet. You should meet the building principal and discuss any special happenings in the building while you are there.
- Familiarize yourself with the phone system and extension numbers for teachers in the building and around the district.
- Always answer the phone, “Hello my name is _____. You have reached the _____ school. How can I help you?”
- Receive and route incoming calls and correspondence.
- File reports and other information as necessary.
- Perform word processing and related technical tasks.
- Performs other tasks related to the efficient operation of the office as assigned.
- Remember attitude goes a long way. You are the first impression of our school – make it a good one.
- Report all incidents of harassment, intimidation and bullying to the teacher and principal in accordance with Policy and Regulation 5512.

Accidents

Accidents in the classroom, hallways, or on the playground should be reported to the principal's office and the nurse's office immediately. An accident form is available from the school nurse and should be completed for any accident involving a student or an adult. There is a nurse on duty in each building to administer first aid and follow up on other necessary procedures.

Substitute Appraisal

- Please know your performance is important to us and has great impact on student achievement. Staff is asked to share feedback with building principals.
- We are committed to your success and all feedback will be reviewed with the building principals. Suggestions and ideas for improvement will be shared with you at a scheduled meeting.

Confidentiality of Student Information

- Releasing of student information to the wrong individual is a violation of district policy 8330 and regulation 8330 (available on the district website at www.staffordschools.org)
- Releasing of student information to the wrong individual is also a violation of numerous laws (district and individual that released the information will be held liable):
 - o Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) & related state laws (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-19; N.J.A.C. 6A32-7.1 to 7.5);
 - These laws generally require that student records cannot be released or shared with anyone besides a student's parent/guardian unless that parent/guardian gives written consent.

Definition of "record" includes:

- Any record, file, document or other material maintained by an educational institution
- Containing any information directly related to a student
- Maintained in any format or medium

Of course there are a few exceptions to this general requirement. These exceptions are as follows:

- School officials with "legitimate educational interests"
 - Other schools into which a student is transferring or enrolling
 - Specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes
 - Appropriate parties in connection with financial aid
 - Organizations conducting certain students for, or on behalf of, the school
 - Accrediting organizations
 - Judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas
 - Health and safety emergencies
 - State and local authorities within a juvenile justice system pursuant to specific state laws. These exceptions are narrowly interpreted by the courts such that the law will weigh in favor of not releasing the information.
- o Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) & related state law (N.J.S.A. 18A:40 – 4): These laws provide added protection to health and medical information. They generally state that covered entities may only release protected health information for the purposes of facilitating treatment, payment or healthcare operations. Schools are considered covered entities.
 - Example – One little statement could violate all of these laws:
Situation: Student C's parents call you because Student C is being teased by Student D. You tell Student C's parents that you understand why they are upset but to try to give Student D a break because he has some emotional and behavioral disabilities which cause him to act this way, you believe that Student D might even be bipolar – but in any event, you say that you will talk to Student D and see what you can do. You think you are trying to calm the situation. However, Student C's parents relay that information back to Student C. Now Student C tells all of his/her friends – and soon everyone in the class is making fun of Student D. Student D is extremely depressed and unable to attend school or even get out of bed.
 - This is a violation of district policy and every law discussed above:

- o FERPA – this is information contained in the student's records
- o HIPAA – this is medical information
- o If true – is an invasion of privacy as the reasonable individual would not want this information shared
- o If false – is defamation of character because it brings down Student D's image to the community
- o Infliction of emotional distress – Student D is suffering emotional harm which is leading to physical harm
- o If something else happens between Student D and any other student, the student's parents will say that you and the district were "on notice" of problems
- o Law Against Discrimination – Student D may claim that he/she was bullied and discriminated against because of his/her emotional and behavioral disabilities.
- People are creative – they will bring actions under every claim just to see which ones will stick.

- **Key points you need to remember:**

- o Can be held individually liable and breaking is a violation of confidentiality policy and the law
- o At a minimum – you will be a witness called to testify
- o ERR ON THE SIDE OF CAUTION – assume the information you are giving is confidential and assume the person is not permitted to have access to that information (then verify you are doing the right thing before you give an answer or provide any information).
- o It is understandable that when someone is asking you questions, they want answers and you want to give it to them – but if its confidential information you cannot –
 - Easy way out - say "Law and district policy do not permit me to tell you that"
- o Before you share information – think about why you are sharing it and think about who you are talking to (if there is not educational or safety purpose for providing the information – DO NOT SHARE IT!).

Emergency Procedures

Procedures to follow when calling your school office to notify of an emergency:

- Call the school office
- Give your name
- Give your extension number, phone number or room number.
- Describe the condition clearly and accurately.
- Don't hang up! Let the person you are talking to end the conversation; other information may be needed.

Policies that must be followed in every emergency preparedness situation:

- All possible steps will be taken to assure the safety of the pupils who attend our schools.
- For all emergencies, the teacher is the authority in the classroom and must act as reason dictates. If time permits, the teacher will receive and follow the directions of the principal.
- The teacher must stay with the children at all times.
- The teacher will not release the children without direction from the principal.

Fire Drill and Evacuation Plans

Each teacher is responsible for seeing that the Fire Drill and Evacuation Plan is posted in a conspicuous place in each classroom to which the teacher is assigned. Each teacher is also responsible for informing all students in each classroom of the evacuation plan for that room.

Special Instructions to the teacher:

- Remove the roll book
- Check for evacuation of all students
- Turn off the lights
- Close all doors and windows
- Proceed with the class to the evacuation area
- If a disaster is within the evacuation path or area, proceed in opposite direction
- Take roll (attendance)
- Keep all students quiet, orderly, and away from emergency personnel and vehicles
- Stay with your students and follow the directions of the administrator or emergency personnel

RED ROVER: AUTOMATED SUBSTITUTE CALLER

Red Rover is an automated system used to find substitutes for teachers and other staff during short term, temporary absences. Red Rover allows staff to register their own absences using a web site or an Interactive Voice Response phone system. Frontline then finds substitute teachers to fill each vacancy and allows substitutes to view and accept jobs online. The administrative management functions of Red Rover provide administrators with full information about absences and substitute assignments.

You will have access to the Red Rover once all required paperwork is completed with Human Resources and Payroll. If you have questions or comments regarding the use of the Red Rover, please contact the Human Resources at 609-978-5700 x1400.