



Beginning teacher
learning suite



Guide for new teachers

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Congratulations on securing your first teaching appointment. We hope your new career with the Department of Education is a fulfilling and rewarding experience

How to use this guide

This guide contains information to help you get started on your teaching journey. As you work through the guide, take the time to reflect on the activities and jot down notes and future actions.

For more beginning teacher support, register for the [Beginning teacher learning suite](#) as soon as you can.



Preparing to teach

Be prepared so you can start your teaching appointment with confidence.

Get ready for your first day

Here's a list of things you can do to prepare for your first day of teaching.

- Review the school website.
- Contact your new school and introduce yourself to the leadership team.
- Set up a pre-commencement visit (if you can).
- Familiarise yourself with the school environment and determine the nature of your teaching duties including:
 - year level/s you'll be teaching
 - class sizes
 - timetables
 - planning processes
 - whole-school procedures
 - classroom and staffroom locations
 - support staff and their roles.
- Familiarise yourself with the curriculum.
- Start curriculum planning (Keep in mind that many teachers plan in teams, so it's worth checking the planning expectations with your school before you start.)
- Set up your classroom. If you're a primary school teacher you can:
 - arrange furniture
 - collect resources such as books from the library
 - display posters
 - gather equipment such as whiteboard markers and an eraser
 - display a visual timetable.
- Prepare a kit that includes whiteboard markers and an eraser, a HDMI cable, a laptop, etc. to carry around with you at the school. (This is particularly important if you're a secondary teacher.)
- Create an introductory newsletter to send to parents.
- Create backup activity ideas for fast finishers (or for when a lesson doesn't quite go according to plan).



Reflection activity

Choose 2 activities from the list and write down any key questions you'd like to ask or actions you'd like to take. For example, if you've reviewed the school website you might like to know:

- the number of students enrolled
- the school philosophy
- what facilities are available
- extra-curricular activities being offered
- events scheduled in the calendar.

Tips for the early days

The first day, week and month of teaching can be both exciting and daunting. Here's what you can do to help get through them.

- **Reach out to your colleagues.** By connecting with your colleagues as soon as you can, you'll create a support network of teachers who know about the school and the students you'll be teaching. They can help you to learn about the school's organisation, structure and culture. They can also give you advice on your initial planning, and your teaching and learning strategies.
- **Learn about the school's procedures.** Familiarise yourself with information about the school day, including:
 - school timetables, assembly and routines
 - whole-school plans such as behaviour, pedagogy, and differentiation.
- **Connect with other beginning and early-career teachers.** This will help you to create a network of support, and connect with others who maybe experiencing similar issues or situations.

Ask for help

You're new to the teaching profession, and it's okay to ask for help. Asking for help isn't a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of great strength. It means you're self-aware and proactive enough to know when you need help.

Asking colleagues for help will allow you to draw on their wealth of knowledge, and receive guidance and support that will help you achieve even greater success.

Here are some ways you could ask for help.

Feeling challenged? If you're feeling challenged by your teaching workload, or have no idea what you're doing, ask a colleague for help. For example, you could say: 'I'm not sure how to establish classroom expectations with my students. Could we set aside some time to sit down and talk through the process? That way I'll know I'm on the right track.'	Feeling overwhelmed? If you're feeling overwhelmed and buried under your teaching workload, ask a colleague for help. For example, you could say: 'I'm feeling really swamped right now. If you have any extra time, would you mind helping me work through this week's maths planning? I know it's your area of expertise, and I'd really appreciate your help and insight.'
Made a mistake? We're all human, and we all make mistakes. When you make a mistake, ask a colleague for help. For example you could say: 'I'm so embarrassed. I completely messed up with managing behaviour during today's science lesson. Thanks for stepping in and helping out. Do you have any feedback or strategies to help me improve for next time? I really value your experience and input.'	Need some expertise? If you feel your planning or work could benefit from additional expertise, ask a colleague for help. For example, you could say: 'I'm working on this term's unit plan, and I'd love your insight into how I can differentiate more. Can we set up a time to chat and bounce some ideas off each other? I really think your advice would help me learn.'



Reflection activity

How do you feel about starting your teaching career? List 3 things you're looking forward to or feel comfortable with.

What makes you nervous? What do you need help with? What would you like to learn more about?

To successfully start your teaching journey, write down at least 3 questions you need answered. Once you've written them down, outline how you'll find the answers. And when you get those answers, write them down.

(We've included an example to get you started.)

Question	Where will I find an answer to this question?	Answer
<i>Are there any other beginning teachers at the school? If so, who are they, and what year levels do they teach?</i>	<i>Ask the principal at my scheduled pre-commencement visit.</i>	<i>Other beginning teachers include:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Sarah Jones (Year 1)</i> <i>David Bell (Year 4)</i>

Working together

You may be teaching in your hometown, another location, or a rural or remote community. Wherever you are, you may feel both excited and overwhelmed about the journey ahead.

Remember that everyone starts somewhere. Be kind to yourself, and know that you belong. You're working for a department that values and supports you.

Here's how the department values the diverse differences of all teachers.

 <p>Generational diversity</p>	 <p>LGBTQ+</p>	 <p>Able. Valuing talent in all abilities</p>
<p>Regardless of your age, the department acknowledges and supports the valuable perspectives and insights you bring to your role as a teacher in a Queensland state school.</p>	<p>You're working for a Gold Standard LGBTQ+-inclusive employer. The department supports the inclusion, productivity, wellbeing and engagement of all LGBTQ+ employees.</p>	<p>Queensland state school teachers of all abilities can participate fully in every aspect and pathway of employment (e.g. accessing workplace facilities, pursuing rewarding career pathways).</p>
 <p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</p>	 <p>Pathways to parity</p>	 <p>Many cultures</p>
<p>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers are supported and valued in Queensland state schools.</p>	<p>You've just started your new teaching career in a workplace where all employees are treated equally. This means all employees have equal rights, and equal access and opportunities to employment and career pathways.</p>	<p>In Queensland state schools, teachers are part of a multicultural workforce. Your differences will be celebrated and recognised, and your diverse skill and experiences are welcomed.</p>



Reflection activity

Reflect on the strengths and diverse characteristics you bring to your school community. What makes you feel included? And how will you include others?

Building relationships

Connections and collaborations with colleagues, parents and students are vital to effective teaching and learning.

Colleagues

Developing and maintaining positive professional relationships with your colleagues is important. It can lead to:

- increased collaboration
- enhanced teacher and student wellbeing
- improved teaching and learning practices
- better student outcomes.

Here are some of your future colleagues, and how you might work with them.

School leaders	Other teachers	Administrative support staff
<p>You may work with school leaders to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on student learning and achievement • engage in professional learning • plan curriculum and learning • discuss performance • discuss capability development opportunities. 	<p>You may work with other teachers to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information and experience • swap teaching resources and learning ideas • engage in professional learning • attend meetings • observe teaching practices • plan curriculum and learning • moderate student assessment • learn from an experienced teacher mentor. 	<p>You may work with administrative support staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand school procedures • order and access resources • seek administrative support • engage with HR processes • organise printing and photocopying • organise school events, fundraisers and other activities.
Student support staff		Other school-based support staff
<p>Student support staff include Head of Special Education Services (HOSES), as well as specialists such as therapists and teacher aides.</p> <p>You may work with support staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • share information and experience • support students during lessons • share planning to prepare specific materials and resources (e.g. materials for a science experiment) • provide adjustments to ensure differentiated learning needs are included • access teaching resources and learning ideas • engage in professional learning • seek guidance (e.g. guidance officers, HOSES). <p>You may also partner with specialists to support the needs of a student in your class (e.g. speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists).</p>		<p>Other school-based support staff includes cleaners, grounds officers, tuckshop convenors and community officers (e.g. community liaisons).</p> <p>You may work with other staff to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organise assistance • access resources • support student wellbeing (e.g. arrange a snack for a child with no lunch) • understand school procedures • discuss processes to best support other staff in their work (e.g. chair stacking at the end of the day) • organise school events, fundraisers and other activities.

Now that you know the types of colleagues you might work with, how can you establish positive professional relationships with them?

Here are some ways to build positive relationships with your colleagues.

Get to know them

Getting to know your colleagues helps you:

- learn who to go to for support
- feel connected with others in your school.

To get to know them:

- spend time in the staffroom
- talk to them
- ask questions (about work and your colleagues)
- share ideas and knowledge
- discuss their expertise and experiences
- introduce yourself to specialist support staff (e.g. guidance officers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, registered nurses).

Get involved

Getting involved in school activities shows that you're keen to become part of the school community.

To get involved:

- engage with a mentor regularly
- attend and participate in whole-staff and small group meetings
- involve yourself in the school community (e.g. P&C)
- support extracurricular activities (e.g. sports, clubs, music ensembles, drama productions)
- participate in the staff social club (or consider starting one)
- join school-based professional learning groups or broader networks
- join professional associations such as the Beginning and Establishing Teachers' Association.

Develop trust

Trust connects individuals, and will help you feel valued at work.

To build trust:

- be truthful
- be reliable
- show integrity
- ask for input/feedback
- admit when you don't know something or have made a mistake
- do what you say you'll do
- extend trust to others
- include others.

Develop mutual respect

Respect will help you feel valued and supported to do your best.

To foster mutual respect:

- act respectfully
- be kind
- show empathy
- be humble
- listen well
- avoid gossip
- be responsible for your words and actions.

Be a team player

When you work in a team, you have shared responsibilities. Teamwork provides unity and support, and builds morale.

To foster mutual respect:

- welcome others
- respect different opinions and ideas
- understand and respect other people's strengths and weaknesses
- be inclusive
- appreciate others
- lend a hand
- acknowledge work well done.

Communicate effectively

Good communication supports effective professional relationships, whether it's:

- a face-to-face conversation
- an email
- a note
- a presentation
- an interview
- a mentoring session.

To communicate effectively:

- use open and honest language
- consider your audience
- be friendly and personable
- actively listen by
 - focusing on the speaker
 - showing concern
 - paraphrasing
 - making eye contact
 - acknowledging what others are saying.



Reflection activity

Identify the colleagues you already know. Write down their names, and some of the ways you could work with them.

Outline how you'll get to know other colleagues in your school and build positive relationships with them.



Parents/Carers

Partnering with parents/carers gives you an opportunity to learn about your students' lives, personalities and learning needs.

You can engage parents to take an active role in their child's learning by:

- supporting them with helping the child at home
- developing shared goals for the child's learning and wellbeing
- sharing decision making around the child's learning.

Take a strengths-based approach when communicating with parents. This will ensure everyone focuses on the student's achievements rather than their deficiencies. In this approach, you should identify and explain:

- what the student can do
- what the student can do with support
- what the student can achieve in the future.



Reflection activity

During the first few weeks of school, how will you build partnerships with parents/carers? Consider:

- the types of communication you'll use
- how often you'll communicate with them
- your interpersonal skills
- how you can build rapport and trust.

Students

You play a unique role in your students' lives. You'll be their instructor, mentor, supporter, carer and assessor. It's a complex role, and so you need to establish positive relationships with your students.

Here's how effective teaching practices can lead to positive teacher–student relationships.

Safe and supportive environments	Student wellbeing	Effective pedagogy
<p>Develop a positive relationship with your students by ensuring your classroom is a safe and supportive environment, free from harassment and bullying. Students who know they are safe and supported are more likely to engage positively with others when learning.</p>	<p>Student wellbeing plays a significant role in a student's ability to form relationships with others. This means student wellbeing and relationship-building skills are very closely related and influence each other.</p> <p>Positive teacher–student relationships can improve a student's wellbeing and provide a model of positive relationships. Nurturing and supporting your students' wellbeing paves the way for success in the classroom.</p>	<p>Effective pedagogy will help you build positive student relationships. For example, pedagogical practices that are age-appropriate, learner-centred and based on research can help students feel that you understand them and their needs.</p>
Teacher expectations		Behaviour support
<p>Did you know that teacher expectations can influence student achievement? Your comments and actions will show your students how you feel about them and what you expect of them.</p> <p>Establishing classroom expectations around behaviour is also very important. These expectations should initially be established and taught through a collaborative process with students. Having clear expectations for behaviour in your classroom will help:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create a positive classroom environment • give all students a sense of security • reduce student anxiety • maximise learning time • enable student self-monitoring • support positive behaviour. 		<p>Positive relationships can be a form of preventative classroom management. Preventative classroom management includes a range of strategies that pre-empt problems.</p> <p>Structures and routines underpin prevention (e.g. teaching students to clean up their desk area and then stand quietly behind their desks when the lunch bell goes). These strategies strengthen your relationship with students by removing an overload of corrective feedback and negativity, and empowering student independence.</p>



Reflection activity

List 3 key strategies you can implement in your future classroom to establish positive relationships with students. What will they look and sound like in action?

Ready, set, go

Welcome once again to the teaching profession. It's great to have you on board.

Here's a list of things you can do in your first month of teaching to kickstart your teaching career. How many do you think you'll be able to tick off?

To do	Tick when completed
Talk to at least 3 other teachers	
Have lunch in the staffroom	
Ask a colleague for help or advice	
Share something that worked well	
Nurture your own wellbeing	
Plan a social activity with a colleague	
Talk to your principal about setting you up with a mentor	
Enrol in the Beginning teacher learning suite	



Reflection activity

Write down any further actions you need to consider as you start your teaching journey.