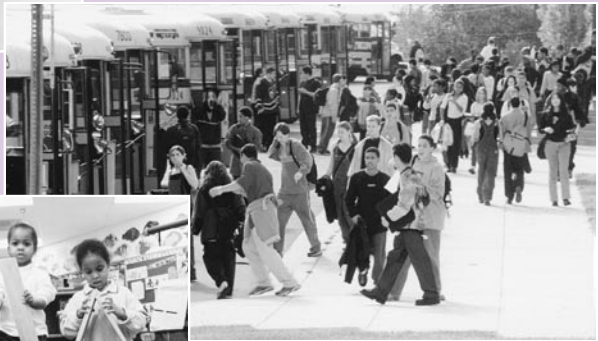


Montgomery County Public Schools

# Substitute Teacher Handbook



Rockville, Maryland



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# **Substitute Teaching in The Montgomery County Public Schools**

Congratulations on your selection as a Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) substitute teacher. Substitute teachers are vital to the continuity of the instructional program and are essential to a quality education for each student.

The material in this booklet was developed by MCPS personnel staff, teachers, and experienced substitute teachers. These materials and practical suggestions should help you work effectively and frequently.

## **Professional Expectations**

### **Eligibility**

Substitute teachers are maintained on the MCPS roster of eligible substitutes contingent upon their ability to comply with personal and professional standards of conduct. Conduct detrimental to the reputation of individual schools and/or the school system, not in the interest of the instructional program, or constituting a threat to the safety or well-being of students, the community, or school employees will be cause for removal from the substitute roster.

Requests to exclude a substitute teacher from an individual school must be submitted, in writing, by a school administrator to the director of the Department of Staffing. This request may be submitted in the form of a memorandum or on the Department of Staffing's "Substitute Deletion Request" form. A reason must be stated for the request for removal. The substitute teacher must be notified in writing, by the principal or designee, of the school's intent to have him/her excluded from its substitute roster. The appropriate staffing team member will review the request to determine the substitute's eligibility for assignment to other schools. Substitute teachers who are determined to be ineligible for assignment to an individual school or who are to be removed from the roster of eligible substitutes will be notified, in writing, by the director of the Department of Staffing.

Inactivity for a period of one year, as well as excessive cancellations and/or refusals of assignments, will also result in the substitute teacher's removal from the roster of eligible substitutes.

## **School Information Packet**

Each school retains an information packet relevant to the operation of the school. It is beneficial to arrive early enough to familiarize yourself with the information contained in this packet.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

In accordance with the agreement between the Montgomery County Education Association (MCEA) and the Board of Education, “Each substitute unit member will work the same number of normal hours worked by the unit member who is on leave or the scheduled number of hours for the vacant position. Starting and dismissal times shall be assigned by the principal.”

## **Classroom Control and Discipline**

MCPS Administrative Regulation JGA-RA, “Maintenance of Classroom Control and Discipline,” states that “Physical restraint may be used by a teacher in an extraordinary case of breach of discipline to restrain a disruptive pupil, provided that the force used is reasonable under the circumstances. The teacher shall inform the principal at once of such an action and shall make an accurate written account of it, within 24 hours, if possible.” Care should be taken during the resolution of disciplinary matters to avoid physical contact unless absolutely necessary.

Inappropriate language, threatening statements, or profanity used by substitutes will not be tolerated.

If you feel immediate follow-up is needed regarding any student’s behavior, contact a school administrator or counselor immediately. Do not, in a short-term substitute assignment, attempt to directly contact a parent or guardian.

## **Corporal Punishment**

MCPS Exhibit JGA-EA, “Disciplinary Action (State Law),” states in part that “Notwithstanding any bylaw, rule, or regulation made or approved by the State Board, a principal, vice-principal, or other employee may not administer corporal punishment to discipline a student in a public school in the State.”

## **Alcohol-Free and Drug-Free Workplace**

MCPS Administrative Regulation COF-RA, “Intoxicants on MCPS Property,” states that penalties will be imposed “when anyone on MCPS property or engaged in MCPS sponsored activities is found to be in possession of or under the influence of intoxicants.”

## **Confidentiality**

Substitutes who are made privy to information regarding students, community members, or school staff may not discuss this information or community concerns with any other parties except legitimate school authorities. Administrators or appropriate staff members should be consulted by substitutes if they determine there is a need to relay information as a result of health, safety, or well-being concerns.

## **Inclement Weather**

Long-term substitute teachers working more than 10 consecutive days in the same assignment do not report to work on snow days. These substitutes will be granted emergency leave and paid for any snow day occurring during their long-term substitute tenure. Short-term substitutes are paid for a full day for delayed openings and early closings. They are not reimbursed for snow days.

## **MCPS Policies and Regulations**

A copy of the *MCPS Policies and Regulations Handbook*, volumes I and II, is kept in the media center of each school and is available for review upon request.

## **Working with Students**

- Show an interest in each student you encounter.
- Students should never be left unattended, and adherence to school rules (e.g., regarding food, drinks, hats, etc.) should be complied with at all times in a fair but firm and consistent manner. Students should be referred to the school nurse, health room technician, or other appropriate staff member in the case of cuts, injuries, or use of medication. Other circumstances may also warrant referral to the same individuals.
- Care should be taken to always address students in a friendly, non-confrontational, nonthreatening tone of voice.
- Dress professionally to encourage student cooperation and respect.

- Follow lesson plans in accordance with the teacher's directions. Ask questions of appropriate staff regarding meaning, intent, availability, location of resources, or any other obstacles to the strict adherence to the teacher's lesson plans.
- Provide feedback to the teacher regarding the day's activities (positive as well as negative student behavior, and notification of any unusual events).
- Leave the classroom and instructional materials in an orderly manner.

## **Advice for Substitute Teachers**

The following suggestions come from successful substitutes. They apply across grade levels and subjects.

- Arrive at school with sufficient time to organize your materials and familiarize yourself with local school rules, bell times, and procedures.
- Take advantage of available school resources, starting with the office. Check with administrators, counselors, and secretaries to get any general information you will need to know that day.
- Greet students warmly as they arrive.
- Make sure to locate class seating chart(s) as soon as possible. Be on top of the roll call situation. If you are not sure how to pronounce a name, spell the child's name and ask the student to pronounce it. Use the seating chart to call on students.
- While you should typically find a well-planned lesson available for use, it is always a good idea to have supplemental plans handy in case the teacher's plans do not cover the time allotted for class. Your plans should be generic and deal with appropriate subject material. Some suggestions follow:
  - Ask the students to write down 5-10 questions pertaining to the subject matter they are reviewing, and then use these for an oral or written quiz.
  - Write vocabulary words (10 to 20) on the board, and ask students to use them in sentences. Have the sentences read, and/or use the words to build a crossword puzzle.
  - Keep a packet of exercises, brain teasers, math detective puzzles, and mysteries to fill in a math lesson. Check the library for materials if you have not brought your own. Let students work individually or in teams based on your feelings about classroom control.

- Expect the unexpected. Be ready for contingent action. Stay in control.
- Those teaching in the same grade can review your plans, make suggestions, and give you ideas. Resource teachers and interdisciplinary resource teachers are excellent resources to consult in secondary schools. Please ask for their support if needed.
- The media specialist can answer questions about the relevance of materials or can show you what is available related to your lesson plan. The specialist's help can be critical if your lesson is too short or if you need to make sure your personal materials are appropriate to use in MCPS classrooms.
- Be flexible, expect the unexpected, and demonstrate a sense of humor.
- Allow yourself time to go over the lesson plans before the students arrive. Use bookmarks to make sure that you know which book to use and which page to turn to.
- Get to know your students better during homeroom, FLEX time, recess, or lunch duty. Building positive relationships with students will increase your ability to manage the classroom.
- Leave a note for the teacher regarding the day's activities.

## Important Telephone Numbers

|   |              |
|---|--------------|
| Automated Calling System .....          | 301-279-3998 |
| Central Substitute Calling Office ..... | 301-279-3280 |
| Communication.....                      | 301-279-3000 |
| Payroll .....                           | 301-517-8100 |
| Human Resources .....                   | 301-279-3204 |

# Using the Automated Substitute Calling System

## How Substitutes Receive Assignments

Teachers and principals register requests for substitutes with an automated substitute calling system. Substitute coverage is arranged by referring to the schools' lists of preferred substitutes or by requesting one specific substitute. Teachers can also register prearranged assignments directly with a substitute so that the substitute does not get calls for other jobs that day. If a preferred substitute is not assigned, the system calls other substitutes based on subject and location preferences submitted during new-substitute orientation.

## Registering with the Automated Calling System

In order to receive assignments from the automated system, you must first register and receive a personal identification number (PIN). The system leads you step by step through the following process:

- Step 1:** Access the system by calling 301-279-3998. Have your social security number and a pencil ready. When the system asks for a personal identification number (PIN), press the star (\*) key.
- Step 2:** Enter your social security number using the telephone key pad. If the system continually asks for your social security number, hang up and call 301-279-3280 for assistance.
- Step 3:** Record your name. After the tone, you will have about three seconds to say your name as you would in normal conversation. You do not have to speak loudly or slowly. Nicknames are fine. Press any key as soon as you finish. The system plays back its recording. If you do not like the way your name sounds, press the "9" key to re-record it. Press the "1" key after you are satisfied with your recording.
- Step 4:** After recording your name, the system assigns your PIN. The number is given rapidly, so press the "9" key at least once to have the system repeat your PIN. You may press the "9" key as many times as you like.
- Step 5:** The system will confirm the correct phone number to contact you. If the number is not correct, you may change it by pressing 1 and following the instructions given by the automated system.

## Accepting an Assignment

There are two ways to accept assignments. You can call the computer to review assignments for which you qualify, or you can accept assignments when the computer calls you.

**Calling the computer:** To search for assignments, call the computer on 301-279-3998. When you enter your PIN, the system lets you change your phone number, accept a job, or review or cancel a job. Choose the “accept a job” option. The system first presents all jobs for which teachers have registered you as their preferred substitute. After listening to a job recording, you must accept or reject it by following system instructions. You only get one chance to accept this type of assignment.

Next, the computer presents available jobs from schools that have designated you as a “preferred substitute.” After listening to each assignment, the system gives you three options:

- Option 1:** *Accept the job.* When you choose this option, the system gives you the job number. When you hear the **job number**, the assignment is yours. Remember, you must have a job number to accept a position.
- Option 2:** *Decline the job.* If you cannot accept this assignment, decline it so that the system will not call to offer it to you at a later time.
- Option 3:** *Bypass the job.* If you are not sure you can take the job, bypass it. The system may call and offer it later if another substitute does not call in and take it first.

When all jobs for which you qualify are presented, the narrator says, “No more job information is available.” You can then return to the regular menu, or you can go back and listen to the jobs you bypassed.

It is best not to call to review jobs between 4:30 p.m. and 8 p.m. During these hours, the system makes the bulk of its outgoing calls. If you call to find work, you may miss a call from the system because your line is busy. The best time to find a daily assignment is early in the morning for work that day. On a morning when you want to work but do not have an assignment, call the central substitute office to learn about additional assignment opportunities.

## Receiving a Call from the Computer

When you answer a call from the system, you can enter your PIN to hear the assignment offer, or you can press the star (\*) key for further instructions. If you enter your PIN, the system presents information about one job, which you may accept or decline. If you hang up, the job is declined. Pressing the star (\*) key before entering your PIN gives you two options: You may put the system on hold for two minutes, or you may turn on a “do not disturb” option that stops further calls during that calling period. When the system is put on hold, it waits two minutes for you to enter your PIN before disconnecting. Use the “do not disturb” option carefully during evening and weekend calling periods, because during these periods, the computer fills future jobs as well as next-day jobs.

If you use an **answering machine**, the system leaves no message when it calls. The system is activated by the entering of the PIN. The system will simply hang up and call another substitute to offer the assignment if your answering machine picks up. If no other substitute is available, you may receive a call later for the same job, but this is not likely. If you are expecting a specific call, you can use the system’s call-forwarding option to receive the call at a location other than your home. By using this option, you can avoid missing an opportunity to work.

## Calling Times

When school is in session, the system calls substitutes each morning from 5:45 a.m. through noon and each evening from 4:30 p.m. through 9:50 p.m. It also calls afternoons and evenings on weekends and some holidays. Morning calls are limited to jobs for that day, but the computer arranges coverage as far into the future as it can each evening and on weekends. Schools maintain separate lists of preferred substitutes for each subject area. These substitutes are always called first unless a teacher specifies that a particular substitute is to get the first call. The computer then calls other substitutes whose location and subject preferences match the assignment.

## Changing Your Telephone Number

The automated calling system gives you a call-forwarding option. If you use this option, all calls from the system go to the new number you enter until you change it back. In addition to your callback number, the system stores your permanent home telephone number. Teachers use this perma-

nent phone number as your identification when registering you as their preferred substitute. Changing the callback number does not change your permanent home phone number. If you want to change your permanent telephone number, call the substitute office at 301-279-3280

## Reviewing and Canceling Jobs

When you call the automated system (301-279-3998), you can review all of your active jobs. (An active job is one that has not started yet.) After reviewing a job, you are given the option to cancel it. **Use this option only in emergencies.** If you find it necessary to cancel a job, do so as soon as possible. You should also notify the school in order to enable it to secure another substitute or arrange for immediate coverage if necessary. Cancellations are recorded and monitored. **Excessive cancellations (10 or more) will result in your removal from the master list of eligible substitutes.**

## Prearranged Assignments

Teachers should register jobs on the computer even when they contact you directly to arrange an assignment. We require teachers to register prearrangement for three important reasons:

- *If you have to cancel a job, the computer immediately seeks a replacement.* If the job is not registered, the teacher and the school must be contacted so that alternative coverage can be arranged.
- *Principals and coordinators call to review absences.* If problems arise and your job is registered, the system provides the information schools need to contact you.
- *The system will avoid calling you to offer other jobs on a day when you already have an assignment.* Most substitutes appreciate this, and it allows the system to concentrate on other assignments.

If you accept an assignment directly from a teacher, you do not have to confirm acceptance with the computer. Teachers will confirm your acceptance when registering the absences. Please confirm with the teacher that he or she will register the assignment so that you will not be contacted for other assignments that day. You can call and obtain the job number using the review process, but this is not required.

## Tips on Using the System

*Hit the phone keys squarely and briefly.* When entering data, **do not hold a key down for very long.** The system allows 30 seconds between entries so that you do not have to rush, but a long tone may be improperly interpreted. If you have made a mistake or if the computer does not respond, hitting the star (\*) key repeatedly will bring you to a point where you can start over. If you make a mistake while trying to accept a job, call the central sub-office immediately. ***Remember, until you hear the job number, you have not accepted an assignment offered by the computer.***

If you have call-waiting, complete your interaction with the substitute management system before transferring to the other line. If you do transfer, the computer will disconnect in 30 seconds. If it disconnects after you have entered your PIN, the system registers the call as a decline and will not offer you that job again.

Once you are familiar with the system, you do not have to listen to all of the instructions each time you call. As soon as the system answers, for example, you can enter your PIN before the system requests that you enter it. If you know the option you want, you do not have to wait to hear the other options before entering your choice. If you press a key while the system is talking, it will normally execute the option you have selected as soon as the message is complete.

## Rotary Telephones

The computer only recognizes signals sent by pressing the keys of a tone-generating telephone. It does not recognize the click or pulse signals generated by rotary phones or push-button phones that do not have the tone option. If you have rotary phone service, you do not need to change to the more expensive touch-tone service to use this system. All you need is a telephone with a tone/pulse switch. To use one of these switchable phones on a rotary service, dial the system with the toggle set to “pulse,” and then, when the system answers, switch to “tone”. When your transaction is complete, switch back to “pulse”. If you have modular wall jacks, installation of a new phone simply requires unplugging your old phone and plugging in the new one. Signal splitters are available that allow two phones to be plugged into the same outlet. In some cases, an inexpensive adapter is needed to convert a four-pronged outlet to a modular outlet.

If you have any problems using the system, please call central sub at 301-279-3280 between 8 a.m. and 3 p.m.

## Marketing Yourself

You may wish to search for jobs, or you may wait for the Central Substitute Calling System to offer you a substitute position. If you wish to search for open substitute jobs, do the following:

- Decide at which schools you would like to work. Telephone those schools and leave your name, telephone number, and qualifications. Express your interest in desired grade levels. You may also notify the schools by leaving a business card or hand-written note with the same information. Leave enough business cards and/or notes for distribution. Do not expect the school to make copies.
- After substituting in a particular school several times, ask the principal to include your name on the priority substitute list. If the principal does this, your chance of getting calls from the central substitute calling system for that school increases dramatically.
- Do your best at each substitute assignment you receive. Satisfied teachers will recommend you to their teammates and friends.
- If you still do not have a position at 7 a.m. on a day you want to work, call the central substitute office at 301-279-3280. A staff member will place you for that day if there are appropriate jobs available.
- Teach each class as if it were your own.



This document is available in an alternate format, upon request, under the Americans with Disabilities Act, by contacting the Department of Communications, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20850, 301-279-3391 or 1-800-735-2258 (Maryland Relay).

Individuals who need sign language interpretation or cued speech transliteration in communicating with the Montgomery County Public Schools may contact Interpreting Services in Programs for Deaf and Hard of Hearing at 301-517-5539 or 5582 (Voice/TTY).

The Montgomery County Public Schools prohibits illegal discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, gender, age, marital status, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, physical characteristics, or disability. Inquiries or complaints regarding discrimination should be directed to the Office of Human Resources, 7361 Calhoun Place, Suite 401, Rockville, MD 20855, at 301-279-3361 (for employment) and the Office of School Performance, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850, at 301-279-8715 (for educational programs and activities). Inquiries or complaints regarding Title IX issues such as gender equity and sexual harassment should be directed to the Title IX coordinator, Office of Strategic Technologies and Accountability, 850 Hungerford Drive, Rockville, MD 20850, at 301-279-3581.



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