



Can you come in
and teach tomorrow?

ONTARIO ENGLISH
Catholic
Teachers
ASSOCIATION

OCCASIONAL TEACHER PRIMER

A Resource for Occasional Teachers

This booklet has been created to give you some practical, useful advice on surviving and thriving as an occasional teacher.

“Occasional teaching is very rewarding, but also very challenging. At every turn, the occasional teacher is tested, pushed, strained and stressed by many factors. These factors make getting through the day in one ‘professional’ piece, with sanity and a love of teaching intact, difficult to say the least. To survive, occasional teachers have to be patient and tolerant, have a good sense of humour, have a thick skin and be very flexible.”

— From An Open Letter from an Occasional Teacher in OTF’s
Survive & Thrive.



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Chapter
One



Preparing Yourself to Thrive as an Occasional Teacher

A. FIRST STEPS

Register as a member on the OECTA website at www.oecta.on.ca. You will find valuable resources and information that will assist you in preparing for your new job.

Be sure to look into the many opportunities that OECTA offers for professional development such as workshops on classroom management, special education, etc., as well as AQ courses, conferences, resources and more.

B. KNOW AND UNDERSTAND YOUR COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

- > Compensation
 - > casual daily rate of pay
 - > long-term occasional teacher (LTO) rate of pay
- > Benefits
- > Sick Leave
- > Other Leaves
- > Working Conditions
 - > instructional day
 - > additional duties
 - > travel
 - > medical/physical procedures
 - > rights
 - > grievance procedure
 - > call-out procedures/job postings
 - > just cause/discipline/dismissal
 - > health & safety
 - > criminal record checks/offence declarations
 - > performance appraisal/evaluation

Ensure that you get a copy of your collective agreement and carry it with you. A copy of all occasional teacher agreements are available on www.oecta.on.ca in the Collective Bargaining section under Contracts & Rights.

C. DEFINITIONS

Occasional teacher

According to the *Education Act*, “a teacher is an occasional teacher if he or she is employed by a board to teach as a substitute for a teacher or temporary teacher who is or was employed by the board in a position that is part of its regular teaching staff including continuing education teachers.”

OECTA membership

According to the OECTA handbook, you are a statutory member of OECTA when you are “*employed by a Catholic district school board as an occasional teacher.*”

Daily occasional teacher rate of pay

Occasional teachers who replace regular day school teachers for a short period of time are compensated based on a casual daily rate regardless of experience and qualifications, with some local exceptions. This may be a “flat rate” or it may be determined by a formula linked to the teacher salary grid.

Long-term occasional teacher rate of pay

When an occasional teacher is assigned to replace the same teacher for a consecutive number of instructional days determined by the local collective agreement, he/she is paid according to the regular day school teacher salary grid.

Dues

For members who are occasional teachers, a fee of 1.67% of salary to the annual maximum fee defined in OECTA’s Handbook, plus a 0.12% membership fee is to be placed in the member protection fund.

Chapter
Two

Bella

Eva

Phil

Miki

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After You Get the Call; Getting to the Classroom and Doing Your Job

A. PREPARING FOR THE DAY

- > Know the location of the school you're going to.
- > Know when your assignment starts and plan to get there at least 15 minutes before your assignment or morning duty.
- > Have the school's phone number with you so if you are delayed unexpectedly, you can contact the school with your ETA.
- > Bring grade-appropriate materials with you just in case you need them.
- > Dress for the weather. Don't forget about the possibility of having yard duty.
- > Dress comfortably and professionally.

B. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- > Introduce yourself and state whom you're replacing that day. Give the job number if you have one. Sign in, if required. Obtain ID badge, if necessary.
- > Ensure you have parked in the correct area and obtain a parking pass from the office, if necessary.
- > If you don't know already, ask for the names of the principal, vice-principal and secretary.
- > Find out the room number and its location.
- > Locate the staffroom, staff washroom and photocopy room.
- > Check the teacher's mailbox for plans, attendance book, handouts, etc.
- > Locate the teacher's plan, the seating plan and school handbook, if available. If you are unable to find a plan, check with the office in case the plans have been faxed or e-mailed in. There may be an Emergency Plan available too.

C. KNOWING THE RULES

- > Know the fire drill/evacuation procedures and exits.
- > Know the internal and external lockdown procedures.
- > Know how to contact the office from the classroom.
- > Learn about other routines and expectations established by the regular teacher dealing with prayers, helpers, pencil sharpening, washroom use, snacks, computer use, etc.
- > **Never leave students unsupervised in the classroom.**
You are required to be in the room even if there is a student teacher, EA, ECE, etc. present.

D. WHEN YOU GET TO THE CLASSROOM

- > Introduce yourself to neighbouring teachers. They can help you find things and offer advice about handling certain students and situations.
- > Familiarize yourself with the material you'll be teaching.
- > Photocopy any materials that are required.
- > Post your name and the date on the blackboard.
- > Post the day's agenda on the blackboard.

E. THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES

- > Greet each student as they enter the classroom.
- > In the classroom, place yourself where you can see and be seen until the class has settled down.
- > If you don't have a seating plan available, create one.
- > Be sure you record attendance accurately and ensure it is received at the office in a timely manner.
- > Briefly introduce yourself to the class and explain that you will be following their teacher's plan for the day.
- > Collect any money, forms or notes the students may give you. Note who gave you what and send any money to the office for safekeeping. (Include a note with a brief explanation, classroom teacher's name and the date before sending students to the office.)

F. SUPERVISION/LUNCH DUTY/BUS DUTY

- > Be on time.
- > Know where you are expected to go and what you are expected to do.
- > Actively supervise students to ensure their safety. Move around the area you are supervising.

G. AT THE END OF THE DAY

- > Try to leave the room in the condition that you found it.
- > Leave time to collect materials or hand out notes, as required.
- > Ensure students complete their agendas and place their homework in their backpacks, if required.
- > Younger students may need additional time to get organized and dressed at the end of the day so adjust your plans accordingly.
- > Leave a note for the teacher outlining what you did or didn't accomplish during the day.
 - > Note the names of students who were particularly helpful as well as those who weren't.
 - > Note any important announcements or other important information (e.g., unexpected fire drill, last-minute staff meeting, etc.).
 - > When the dismissal bell rings, walk students to the exit doors to ensure safe dismissal.

Chapter
Three

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Dealing with Special Circumstances

A. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- > **Do not, in any way, use force or touch students at any time.** Never speak to students alone. Have another student or teacher present and never close the door. Be visible.
- > Try to have at least one positive interaction with each student each day.
- > Keep rules simple. Be consistent in applying them. Be firm, but fair.
- > Be very cautious in administering consequences. Consequences should be clear and specific. They should be reasonable, logical and proportional to the violation.
- > Avoid identifying consequences which you will have difficulty enforcing. Don't back yourself into a corner.
- > **Say what you mean and mean what you say. Do what you said you would do.**
- > Never punish the whole class for the behaviour of a few.

- > Do not keep students in after school.
- > Expect to be tested by some students who want to determine the boundaries of behaviour acceptable to you and your competency to respond. It is essential you act immediately, calmly and appropriately, but it is vital that you do not overreact.
- > Use humour as it may defuse an escalating situation. Don't use sarcasm or embarrass or humiliate students.
- > Avoid power struggles/arguments with students.
- > Remain calm. Use a soft, low voice. Sometimes, lowering your volume will be more successful in getting the students' attention rather than raising your voice.
- > Document and keep a copy of any incidents that seem out of the ordinary, keeping to facts (e.g., what did you see and hear **not** what/why do you think).

Regardless of the age of the student, teachers are in a position of trust and should take great care to avoid relationships that cross professional boundaries.

- > Be friendly, but professional.
- > Be frank, but considerate.
- > Be helpful, but non-invasive.

“Teachers who inspire realize there will always be rocks in the road ahead of us. There will be stumbling blocks or stepping stones; it all depends on how we use them.”

— Author unknown

B. STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

- > Read any information available that will help you identify and assist students with special needs.
- > Information on students who have health concerns (e.g., severe allergies, asthma, etc.) should be posted in the teacher’s Emergency Plan, staffroom or be kept in a binder in the office. Ensure you are aware of any procedures regarding these students.
- > Familiarize yourself with any behaviour plans that exist to maintain consistency for those students involved.
- > Give special attention to those who appear in need.

A globe of the Earth is shown, tilted on its axis. The continents are color-coded: North America is red, South America is yellow, Europe is green, Africa is purple, Asia is orange, and Australia is blue. The oceans are light blue. The text 'Chapter Four' is overlaid in the center in a pink, serif font. The background is a blurred classroom setting with a whiteboard showing numbers and letters.

Chapter
Four

Motivating Students

A. 7 THINGS GREAT TEACHERS KNOW, UNDERSTAND AND DO TO MOTIVATE STUDENTS TO LEARN WITHOUT USING PUNISHMENTS OR REWARDS

1. Great teachers understand that they are in the relationship business. Superior teachers establish good relationships and have high expectations.
2. Great teachers communicate and discipline in positive ways. They let their students know what they want them to do, rather than by telling students what **not** to do. **As often as possible, “catch” students’ positive behaviours and praise them.**

3. Great teachers inspire rather than coerce. They aim at promoting responsibility rather than obedience. They know that **obedience does not create desire**.
4. Great teachers identify the reason that a lesson is being taught and then share it with their students. These teachers inspire their students through curiosity, challenge and relevancy. **They help students make connections to the real world.**
5. Great teachers improve skills that prompt students to **want** to behave responsibly and **want** to put effort into their learning.
6. Great teachers have an open mindset. They **reflect** so that if a lesson needs improvement, they look to themselves to change **before** they expect their students to change.
7. Great teachers know education is about motivation. High motivation has a greater effect on learning and retention than high capability.

“I hear and I forget. I see and I remember.
I do, and I understand.”

— Confucius

Chapter
Five



Helpful Resources

A. USEFUL WEBSITES

- > OECTA www.oecta.on.ca
- > Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan (OTIP) www.otip.com
- > Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) www.otpp.com
- > Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) www.oct.ca
 - > Online Library Catalogue www.oct.ca/library
- > The Qualifications Evaluation Council of Ontario (QECO) www.qeco.on.ca
- > Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) www.otffeo.on.ca
 - > Survive & Thrive www.survivethrive.on.ca
- > Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) www.ctf-fce.ca
- > Service Canada www.servicecanada.gc.ca
- > Ministry of Education www.edu.gov.on.ca
 - > Ontario Provincial Education Network (OPEN) www.edu.gov.on.ca/tools/eduminister/eng/openlist
 - > The New Teacher Induction Program (NTIP) www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/faq.html#1

- > Curriculum Documents and Exemplars
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teachers/curriculum.html
- > Environmental Education :
 - > Ready, Set, Green! (Elementary and Secondary, 2007)
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/document/policy/environment.html
 - > Environmental Education, 2009 Edition www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/curriculum/secondary/environment.html
 - > Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/initiative.html
 - > Teacher Learning and Leadership Program
www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html
- > Curriculum Services Canada www.curriculum.org
 - > Online Course Profiles www.curriculum.org/csc/library/profiles/profiles.shtml
 - > Webcasts (online video presentations)
www.curriculum.org/csc/webcasts.shtml
 - > Podcasts (Online Video Presentations)
www.curriculum.org/secretariat/podcastlist.shtml
 - > Teacher-Developed Resources www.curriculum.org/tcf/teachers/projects.shtml

- > Ontario Software Acquisition Program Advisory Committee offers downloadable software and documentation for teachers www.osapac.org
- > SafeSchools www.safeschools.com
- > Classroom Resources to Counter Cyberbullying www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/educational/lessons/cyberbullying.cfm
 - > Interview tips, free printables, links, activities www.supersubstituteteachers.com/
 - > Riddles, journal topics, game ideas www.teacherneedhelp.com/students/riddles.htm
 - > Create fun word searches, math puzzles, mazes www.puzzlemaker.com
- > Catholic Curriculum Corporation www.catholiccurriculumcorp.org

B. WHO CAN YOU CALL FOR HELP OR ADVICE?

- > OECTA Provincial 1.800.268.7230 or 416.925.2493
- > Your Local Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit President
- > Your Local Elementary, Secondary or Unit President

Teacher's
Notes



Ontario English Catholic Teachers Association
www.oecta.on.ca