Early Career Teachers' Handbook







Revised September 2024

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Frequently Asked Questions

NBTA wishes to thank the NBTA POINT Rep Volunteers for aiding in the revision of this document.

Teachers are encouraged to explore the NBTA website regularly and check out the articles in the ConnectED publications that are specific to early career teachers. If have questions or if you need support in a particular area, please reach out to your mentor, your POINT rep, your administrator, or an NBTA staff officer. You're never alone.

Never hesitate to ask questions!

Welcome to the Teaching Profession

POINT

POINT stands for the **Professional Orientation and Induction of New Teachers**. POINT is the banner name for any activity or event that NBTA funds to support early career teachers (ECT). Each NBTA branch has a local POINT representative who takes the lead in guiding and staying in contact with you throughout the year. The NBTA recognizes the importance of supporting ECT as they develop their professional identity, and this program is simply one means of offering support services.

Who Qualifies?

Any teacher who has 0-5 years of cumulative teaching experience (day-to-day supply plus contract time combined) is included in the NBTA POINT program. The list of participants is compilated with the help of POINT reps, district contacts, NBTA school reps, and the NBTA registration database.

Funding

The Funding for the POINT program comes from NBTA dues and is dispersed over a fiveyear period, based on what year of experience the teacher is in. The funding may support ECT with resources, release time for professional development, welcoming and rejuvenating meetings, or any other ideas that would be beneficial to an ECT.

Available Support Based on Cohorts

Cohort Year 1: Your NBTA branch is provided with a lump sum of funds for this cohort to plan a "Welcome to the profession" event for you, or to offer welcome gifts/resources they feel you may need.

Cohort Year 2: You are eligible to attend the Compass Conference for early career teachers. This one-day conference will give you a better overview of what your association offers, plus there will be valuable professional learning that is applicable to ECT. Details of the conference are shared through your POINT reps, email and social media platforms.

Cohort Year 3 & 4: You are eligible to apply for a maximum of one day of release time to attend a professional learning event relevant to your teaching needs. Contact your POINT representative for details on how to request your day. Approval will be granted pending availability of a supply teacher.

Cohort Year 5: Your NBTA branch is provided with a lump sum of funds for this cohort to be used for continued support of ECT as you become more comfortable in your role. The use of these funds is based on the needs of the individual teachers.

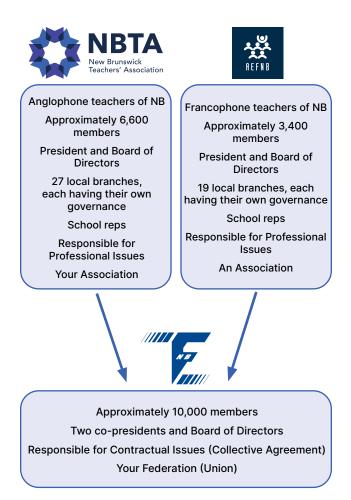
Am I in the Program?

If you have not heard from your NBTA branch POINT representation yet, please reach out. It is possible that you were missed. Our system isn't perfect and this can easily happen, especially if you were hired partway through the year. We don't want anyone slipping through the cracks! Contact Janet Peabody at the NBTA office for more information (janet.peabody@nbta.ca or 506-452-1828).

Click here for <u>POINT 2.0 Supplement</u> that contains further information about this NBTA program.

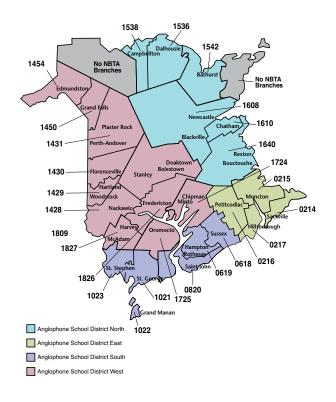
Where do we fit in?

The NBTA is one of two professional associations in NB. It is comprised of approximately 6,600 Anglophone teachers. Our sister organization is AEFNB, and they consist of approximately 3400 Francophone teachers. Together they make up the NB Teachers' Federation (NBTF).



The NBTA Structure

There are 27 NBTA branches that represent each part of the province. Each branch has their own local governance that consists of elected branch officers (President, Vice-president, Director, Secretary, Treasurer, a representative from each school (school rep)). There may also be various branch committees. This group meets 4-10 times per year and discusses local issues and concerns, make decisions in the interest of the teachers in their branch and of NB teachers in general.



Each branch has a Board of Directors member that brings local concerns to the provincial forum, provides direction to the Association, and reports back to their branches. Attending branch meetings is a great way to stay informed and have your voice heard.

Where do my dues go?

Fulltime members of NBTA/NBTF pay an annual dues amount of \$760 which allows the NBTA/ NBTF to maintain full-time staff who oversee professional, legal, and contractual issues. NBTA staff provide services related to association business, professional learning, finances, pension, communications, public relations, counselling, and legal support.

NBTA Staff information can be found here: www.nbta.ca/staff

Teacher Counselling Services

Wellness is often something we consider when we get sick or face a crisis. Our wellness depends on our lifestyle and not only how we cope with the physical demands we put on ourselves, but also the emotional demands.

First-year teachers are going through a transition from being a student to being a professional teacher. Transitional phases are sometimes difficult and painful. There may be an awareness that your expectations and what you are able to do are different. You may also be overwhelmed with your workload and, therefore, work late into the night, on week- ends, and at lunch and recess, to the point where your own personal wellness begins to suffer.

The first years of teaching are filled with high expectations, excitement, anticipation, and lots of change! You are facing a challenge that all teachers face - striking a balance. The balance is between:

- Personal Life and Work Life
- Emotional Life and Professional Life
- Perfectionism and Surviving
- Asking for Help and Doing it All Yourself
- Helping Others and Helping Yourself
- Saying Yes and Saying No

Stress might mean: Exhaustion, Conflict, Pressure, Powerlessness, Anger, Nervousness, Anxiety, or Withdrawal.

NBTA has six full-time teacher counsellors available to support you:



Michael LeBlanc Counsellor/ Wellness Coordinator Fredericton and Oromocto Education Centres 506-462-0208 <u>michael.leblanc@nbta.ca</u>



Lisa Vienneau Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator Woodstock Education Centre 506-325-3932 lisa.vienneau@nbta.ca



Sara Hayward Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator Saint John & St. Stephen Education Centres 506-832-6032 sara.hayward@nbta.ca



Karrie Harris Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator Hampton & East Saint John 506-634-2901 karrie.harris@nbta.ca

Lisa Calhoun Counsellor/Wellness Coordinator ASD-East Education Centres 506-855-5243 <u>lisa.calhoun@nbta.ca</u>



Michael Tremblett Counsellor/ Wellness Coordinator ASD-North Education Centres 506-624-2103 <u>mike.tremblett@nbta.ca</u>

Don't hesitate to contact the counsellor in your area. This service is confidential and open to all. The Teacher Wellness Website can be found at <u>teacherwellness.ca/</u>. This site is filled with valuable wellness resources for you to explore and use.

Professional Learning Services

NBTA offers a host of professional learning opportunities based on member needs. There are several standing themes and new opportunities can be made available upon member request. The PL Team consists of: Kimberley McKay (curriculum & assessment, professional conduct, policy & research); Michael Butler (Member Services); Dawn Beckingham (branch PL chairs support, early career teachers, NBTA Councils programs). Reach out to any staff member for specific requests.

NBTA Councils

When you register as an NBTA member, you will be asked to select which council you wish to belong to. There are three councils to choose from: Elementary; Middle Level; High School. Each Council has their own governance and provide professional learning opportunities for their members.

Council Day Conference

Your NBTA Councils host an annual conference in early May. This conference is funded by a portion of your NBTA dues. The conference location is typically rotational, and the program is targeted to meet the needs of all grade levels.

Institutes

Your Councils also offer professional learning institutes throughout the year. Tune in to NBTA communication channels to learn more:

- <u>ConnectED</u>
- Facebook and Twitter
- Word-of-mouth
- Email

Other professional learning opportunities

NBTA staff can create a learning opportunity based on the needs of members. If you reach out with a topic, we can either provide you with resource information from another source, research information for you, or create a workshop on the suggested topic, if applicable.

Here are some professional learning opportunities that we have provided in the past:

- Classroom Management 101
- Early Career Teacher Workshops
- Compass: Early Career teacher Conference
- Developing Successful Schools (DSS) workshop for school leaders
- CONTACT (Conference On New Techniques And Classroom Teaching) - hosted by the four Atlantic Provinces
- Fierce[®] Conversations
- Fierce® Accountability
- Fierce[®] Generations
- NBTA Teacher Counsellor Wellness Session
- When Conflict Arises
- School Improvement Planning Networks
- Understanding and Addressing Teacher Stress
- Pension Seminars
- NBTA Credit Union Financial Planning
- NBTA Leadership Empowerment Series
- NB Lead

Accessing Funds

Click here to access grant funds to attend PL: Educational Improvement Grant (EIG)

Ask your POINT rep or your NBTA Branch PL Chair for more details.

Pension

Although retirement may seem far away for a beginning teacher, it is never too early to plan for your future. You should be informed on your pension benefits. NBTA offers support in this area by offering pension seminars and providing information through the appropriate channels.

A teacher under contract is automatically a member of the New Brunswick Teachers' Pension Plan (NBTPP). The NBTPP provides a secure pension to teachers upon retirement and until death. This benefit reflects the services as a teacher in the province of NB. There are also survival benefits as applicable.

When can I retire?

There are various provisions under the NBTPP which may allow you to retire with either a reduced or unreduced pension depending on your circumstances. More information on pension can be found <u>here</u>. You can also consult with the NBTA Staff Officer of Teacher Welfare Services.

Purchasing Pensionable Service

Purchasing service allows you to "buy-back" certain periods of eligible past service in order for it to count towards your NBTPP.

If you supply taught outside of a contract you may be eligible to purchase service. Any questions regarding eligibility requirements can be answered through the Member Service Team with Vestcor, toll free at 1-800-561-4012. Additional information can be accessed at <u>vestcor.org</u>.

How to get involved with NBTA

There are many opportunities for teachers to be part of their professional association. Teachers can:

- Become a School Rep that is, the contact person in your school for NBTA communication.
- Become a member of your Local Branch Executive, the group in your branch who conducts NBTA business for the branch (president, vice-president, treasurer, secretary, PD chair, etc.).
- Become a delegate at the provincial Annual General Meeting of the NBTA. These delegates are elected at the Branch level and are the ultimate decision-making body, voting on all issues that affect policy and direction for the teachers of the province.
- Become a member of the Board of Directors of the NBTA. Directors are elected at each Branch to represent the Branch at the three Board meetings held each year in Fredericton.
- Run for office of the President of the NBTA, a two-year fulltime elected position. This person acts as the official spokesperson for all New Brunswick teachers, chairs all Board meetings and represents teachers on a variety of committees.
- Serve on Elementary, Middle Level or High School Council. These three groups organize the annual provincial Council Professional Learning Day, as well as contribute to various PL and curriculum initiatives.
- Become a committee member on one of various NBTA committees that can be found <u>here</u>. Reach out to the NBTA President to submit your name in the area that interests you.

NBTF: Your Union

The New Brunswick Teachers' Federation is a bilingual organization that represents all teachers in the public school system of New Brunswick. Two elected Co-Presidents, Stéphanie Babineau (AEFNB) and Peter Lagacy (NBTA), are the spokespersons of the NBTF.

It has two major mandates:

- 1. It represents all New Brunswick active and supply teachers in the negotiation and application of the Collective Agreement with the Board of Management. This includes presentation of grievances and employer-employee relations with the Board of Management, School Districts, and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.
- 2.It is responsible for pensions and teacher certifications, as well as providing services in the area of group insurance and employee assistance programs.

Questions concerning any of the following can be directed to an NBTF Labour Relations Officer:

- Contractual issues (class size, salary, seniority, recall, leaves of absence, etc.)
- Negotiations
- Deferred Salary Leave
- Educational Leaves
- Group Insurance
- Maternity and Parental Leaves
- Pension
- School Administrators
- Supply Teachers
- Violent Incident Reports
- Rights and Responsibilities
- Teacher Evaluation Process
- Teacher Wellness
- Legal issues related to the workplace

The NBTF organizational chart can be found here.

Your NBTF staff information can be found here.

Legal Rights and Responsibilities

The province, school districts and schools all have very rigorous policies related to teachers' rights and responsibilities. You should review all policies. Know your responsibilities when it comes to:

- Protection/Neglect of a child
- Supervision of students
- Field trip policies
- Extracurricular responsibilities
- Parental permissions
- Education Act (role of parent, duties of pupils, duties of teachers, duties of principals)

When in Doubt...

Seek advice from your principal or supervisor, but don't hesitate to contact NBTF or NBTA.

DO NOT let anyone tell you that you can't call. You have every right to explore your options, and everyone is advised to reach out with concerns/ questions.

Professionalism

The Professional Code of Conduct can be found here: <u>CODE</u>

You are a professional

The role you play in society is a crucial one and you are perceived as a positive influence and role model in the lives of the students you teach. As such, you need to think of yourself as a professional and conduct yourself in a professional manner, 24/7.

Dress code

Fashion and social acceptance of attire changes with generations, however, it is important that your attire be neat and clearly distinct from your students. This will contribute to your status of professional in the classroom and your students and parents will see you as such.

Social Media

Think before you post! Electronic communication and social media can be effective and enjoyable tools for teachers, but they must be used cautiously. Here are some suggestions in keeping your experience positive and safe:

- Teachers are teachers 24 hours a day: Nothing is private now. Remember that your comments are permanent and reflect your professionalism.
- Use and understand privacy settings, but always consider that everything you write could become public.
- Your relationship with students must be professional, not private. It is easy to say or write something that can be perceived differently and used against you. The results can be very serious.
- Teachers should not be "friends" with students on any social media platform. Also be cautious with parents. Serious concerns have arisen through Policies 701(Pupil Protection), 311

(Information and Communication Technology use), and the NBTA Code of Professional Conduct.

- Notify parents/guardians if you are using social media as a learning tool. Some parents limit their child to these platforms.
- Follow media release guidelines and policies established by your district and respect parents' wishes to not publish their child's name/picture from a school event.
- Work emails are to be used for work related situations only. Communication through email should be clear, concise, and factual. Sensitive/challenging conversations should be done in person or by phone. Access to emails relating to students may be requested by parents under the Right to Information Act (RTIPA).

Confidentiality

Events that happen within the school or with specific students must not be discussed in any fashion other than through formally established channels.

Surviving the Early Days: what to expect

Prior to the First Day of School

Ask your administrator how to apply for your teacher laptop in your district.

Curriculum guides can be found here: GUIDES

Register with the NBTA at <u>www.nbta.ca</u>.

Click on "Register with the NBTA" button. This is very important for funding purposes and for accessing support from your professional association.

Having difficulties? Contact Carlene Parker at <u>carlene.parker@nbta.ca</u>

While you are on the website, check out the Professional Interests tab for Early Career and Supply Teacher information.

Find out who the NBTA POINT rep is in your Branch. They will be a great support!

Make sure you have all the information needed concerning the following:

- Your teaching schedule, class lists
- Student medical information, personalized learning plans (PLP) for students, parent information forms
- Emergency drill procedures, map of school indicating emergency exits
- Information of the role of an educational assistant (EA) in your classroom
- Supervision duty schedule and responsibilities
- Procedure on how to report classroom incidents, how to refer a student to guidance, resource, ESST, and social development
- Procedure on how to book space in the school (library, computer/science lab, etc.)
- Ask if you've been assigned a mentor yet and find out who it is.

 Use the best practices learned in your BEd program to set-up your classroom for success.

The First Day with Students

- Be prepared and organized
- Be warm and inviting, but maintain your professionalism and establish respect
- Focus more on building relationships than curriculum
- First "lessons" should incorporate expectations and agreed upon classroom norms and rules. Rehearse and review classroom procedures regularly

Advice from other Early Career Teachers:

"You don't need to know it all, you have a team around you with a vast knowledge and skills, use them."

"It's all about how the kids feel at the end of each day, not what you have taught them."

"Don't worry about getting everything perfect your first time around!! Take it day by day and do the best you can."

"Be organized from the get-go and don't leave anything unknown. Use the help that is provided and don't be afraid to ask questions."

"It may take some time to find out what works best for you. Try a few different methods out; you don't have to stick with one thing."

"Regardless of how bad you think your day went, reflect and celebrate one thing that went well at the end of each day."

What to do when I am sick or have a PL day?

Get to know the Absence Management System

You may have used the Absence Management System as a supply teacher. You now need to know how to use it as an FTE teacher. Each district has their unique way of requesting a leave of absence (sick, meeting, family day, compassionate leave, PL). Ask a teacher colleague to show you how. It's better to know in advance than to learn on your own the morning you are sick!

Preparing for a Supply

If you have done some supply teaching, based on your experience, you would know what a good lesson plan left behind looks like compared to a not so good lesson plan. Make yours the best ever!

Many times you will know in advance or be able to predict if you will be out of your classroom the next day. These plans are easier to prepare because you know where your students left off and where they need to go. The challenge arises when the unexpected occurs. Best practice would be to have an emergency plan that can potentially last up to three days. This would be a general lesson plan that is appropriate for all students in your classroom, regardless of where you are at in your curriculum delivery.

When you place your absence in the Absence Management System, include in the notes for the supply teacher where to find your lesson plan and what supervision or daily activities are taking place that day.

Supply Teacher Folder

Have an easily accessible Supply Teacher folder in your classroom. In your lesson plan, indicate where this folder can be found. Also let your administrator or a colleague know where it is. This will avoid any unnecessary early morning scrambling for your colleagues.

Include the following:

- Updated class lists with seating arrangement
- Emergency contact numbers for students
- Information about your students who have behavioural, medical, or academic challenges
- If there is an EA in your classroom, what is their role?
- Daily or weekly routine information (morning announcement procedures, recess and lunch information, dismissal instructions)
- Bell schedule
- Supervision schedule, instructions, and expectations
- Classroom norms, expectations, and responsibilities
- Map of school
- Emergency plans (fire, lockdown, power outage)
- Any technology information
- An emergency lesson plan for each class that you teach that can be used by any teacher, regardless of their background.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

The First Week

Learn your students' names quickly and scan inventories for points of interest. Go over the next day's lesson plan and adjust based on the feel of the class from the day before. Remember to take care of yourself as well – exercise, talk to friends and colleagues, eat well, hydrate, stay away from negativity, rest your mind, and get sufficient sleep.

Keep yourself organized

- Adjust seating plans as needed
- · Develop a strategy to keep parents informed
- Keep evidence of learning from each student
- Document behaviour issues
- Review school policies and remind students regularly
- Seek professional learning opportunities in areas that you feel you need support

Build Relationships

- With students inside and outside of the classroom. Consider eating lunch with them once a week; Be a spectator at their extracurricular activities; Become a coach or the lead of a school-based group.
- With parents Make early connections with positive messaging. This will serve you well if a problem does arise because you will already have built that trust and respect. Try to make a minimum of two positive parent connections per week.
- With colleagues Surround yourself with positivity. Lean on your colleagues for support as they are the only ones who know what it truly means to be a teacher.

Reminders

- Be in the classroom when students arrive. Greeting them at the door is even better.
- Be organized and prepared.
- Establish classroom routines early.
- Have the attention of all students before you begin.
- Share talk time with your students.
- Use a friendly tone of voice.
- Productive noise is not bad noise.
- Try to be firm and fair.
- Give reasons on why you are teaching a certain lesson, highlighting good work or administering a certain consequence.
- Set rules on use of electronics and stick to them.
- Recap the lesson before the class ends.
- Celebrate successes, even the smallest ones.
- Tell students in your own way that you are looking forward to seeing them tomorrow.
- Give students a heads-up on what will be happening during the next class.
- Be friendly, but remember, you are their teacher, not their friend.
- Smile!

Duty to Report Abuse or Neglect

Links to Various Policies related to Child Protection

- <u>NB Child Abuse Protocol (2005)</u>
- Policy 701(2004)
- Education Act (1997)
- Family Services Act (1983)
- Criminal Code of Canada (1985)
- NB Human Rights Act (2011)

It is mandatory to report suspected abuse or neglect of children under the age of nineteen. Parental consent is not required for advising Child Protection Services. Reporting of children between the ages of sixteen and nineteen should occur with their consent.

Procedure

- 1. Familiarize yourself with the guidelines on child abuse and neglect.
- 2. The adult suspecting the abuse or neglect is the person that must contact Child Protection Services Branch of Social Development.
- 3.Call 1-833-733-7835 or after-hours Emergency Social Services 1-800-442-9799.
- 4.You should record in print the details of the report that was made. This should include the date, time and name of person you spoke with. Accurate records are extremely important. Keep this filed in a secure space.
- 5. The principal should be made aware of the report.
- 6.If a social worker or the police need to be involved, the child should remain in a safe space with an adult until further directives are given.
- 7. If you suspect the abuse or neglect is occurring within the school, use appropriate 701 protocol.

Points to Consider

- Trust your intuition
- Do not discuss the situation outside of designated authorities
- Respect the privacy of all concerned

Upgrade your Certification & Salary

Ways to Acquire Certificate VI

Masters of Education Degree: This is the traditional route to a Cert 6. The Office of Teacher Certification (OTC) must approve the program. 36 credit hours of course work or equivalent is required. For more information contact: <u>OTC</u>

Non-Masters Program: This option can be completed in two ways. The Office of Teacher Certification (OTC) must approve the program. For more information contact: <u>OTC</u>

1. Ten courses (30 credit hours) at the graduate level (6000 level) in the same area of discipline.

2. Ten courses (30 credit hours) at the graduate level (6000 level). The courses may come from ANY combination of universities (on-line, summer courses, etc.) as long as they are all at the graduate level.

- The courses must result in your getting an additional minor or upgrading a minor to a major.
- Then you need a concentration of three courses (9 credit hours) in ONE of these strands: Administration, Student Services (i.e. Guidance or Special Ed.), Curriculum or General Pedagogy (such as a Human Rights course).
- The remaining courses can be any of your choice, as long as they are 6000 level.

You can contact NBTA for further information.

Important Dates Related to Certification:

If you receive a change in your certification, you must apply by **October 31** (to be back-dated to July 2) or by **March 31** (to be back-dated to January 2).

All applications for certification changes must be made to: Office of Teacher Certification Department of Education P.O. Box 6000 Fredericton, N.B. E3B 5H1 Tel. 506-453-2785 Fax 506-453-5349

Ways to Increase Your Salary

- 1. You can apply to have your previous work experience evaluated for an increase on the salary grid. Contact the Office of Teacher Certification to do this. Form to complete is here: <u>https://www.pxw1.snb.ca/snb7001/e/1000/</u> <u>CSS-FOL-19-007E.pdf</u> Beyond this form, there is another form for special reassessment of previous experience: form-q-special.pdf
- 2.You can upgrade your certification. Article 37 of the Teachers' Collective Agreement provides for an Educational Leave Program.

Eligibility: Any teacher who has been employed in NB for five (5) years is eligible for an educational leave of up to one (1) year. The teacher must meet the following conditions when applying:

- a) currently teaches on a B contract for at least 70% of the time
- b) has a cumulative total of five (5) years under a B or D contract.

Purpose: Enhancing qualifications, improving certification, or for professional growth. The leave may be one semester/term or one full academic year.

Salary: A teacher on Ed Leave receives 80% salary for the period of the leave.

Criteria: Leaves are granted on the following factors- program of study; cost of leave; geographic and grade level distribution; school/ district recommendations; number of years of experience; number of times applied; among others.

Other NBTA Publications

The NBTA website hosts valuable information and reference documents for its members.

You can access:

Early Career and Supply Teacher Resources

Resource Gallery

- If Conflict Arises
- Deferred Salary Leave
- Teachers' Rights to Work in a Healthy Safe Environment
- NBTA Members' Handbook
- Policy 703 information
- NBTA Code of Professional Conduct

Current and past <u>ConnectED (NBTA News)</u> Publications

Advocacy Groups in Education

Insurance and Financial Services information

Under the <u>FORMS</u> tab you can find (updated throughout the year):

- Provincial Awards information
- Educational Improvements Grant applications
- Teacher Designed Professional Learning Grants application
- Interest-free loan application
- Pension Seminar information

Professional Learning Opportunities

Professional Conduct and Standards

NBTA Branch information

NBTA Committee information

Affiliated Organizations

Collective Agreement and related communiques

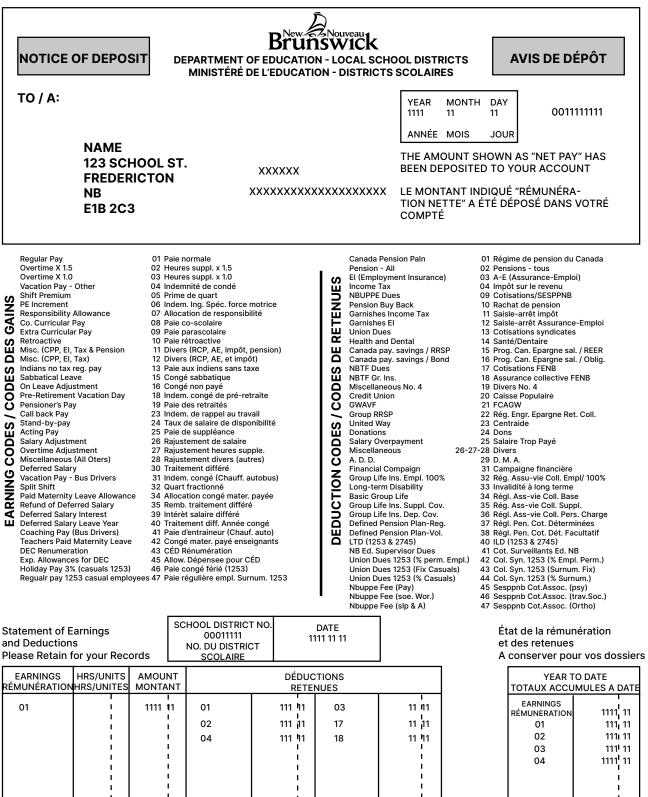
Legal Information

- Copyright Matters
- Policy Statement on Fair Dealing
- Youth Justice information
- Advocacy History

And so much more ...

Check the website regularly for updates.

Reading Your Pay Stub



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Surviving the Early Days

1. What should I expect the first day of school for teachers (Admin Days)?

You should check with your admin team to see what time you should arrive, how to dress for the day, and your activities.

2. When can I leave the school after my students have gone?

Contractually, you are expected to stay 20 minutes after the last bus leaves. Check with your admin team for other situations.

3. I have only been teaching a few days and I'm exhausted. Is this normal?

Yes, everyone feels the same the first few days of teaching, even the "seasoned" teachers. It's important to look after yourself. Drink lots of water, eat well and be well rested. Chat with other teachers in the building - they'll confirm you're normal.

4. I don't have a teacher laptop. How do I get one?

Once you have your contract, you should contact the district Human Resource representative for instructions on how to obtain your laptop. You may need your certification number and your employee number.

5. Who do I call or contact if I'm sick?

You should check with the admin team at your school the first few days to find out what the protocol is for teacher absenteeism at your place of work. Have a colleague show you how to use the Absence Management System as a contract teacher.

School Support

1. I hear teachers talking about ESST. What are they talking about?

This stands for Educational Support Services Team. It consists of members of the school administration, guidance, resource and other invited parties. They meet to discuss academic, and behavioral and school concerns. You can refer a student to be discussed at an ESST meeting. Ask the resource teacher about the process.

2. I have a question about the curriculum?

You can check with another teacher in your school who teaches the same curriculum, or your administration. You can check for documents on the EECD website or contact your literacy, numeracy, technology leads, mentors or learning specialists at your District Education Centre.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment

1. I have noticed a lot of bullying and namecalling in my classroom. How do I stop it?

Refer to the class and school rules. Remind the student or students the importance of respect and that every student has a right to be respected. Notify the parents/guardians of the situation. Remember to start the conversation on a positive note, and then mention the concern. If the bullying does not stop, you will need to seek intervention from your guidance counsellor and administration for further action. Most schools have a "no bullying" policy implemented and methods of intervention.

2. It seems to take my students too long to settle down at the beginning of class. What are some strategies I can use?

Be sure to be well prepared for your lesson and be sure that you're ready to begin right away. Don't begin your lesson until you have the attention of the entire class. To get their attention, establish a procedure you can use all year. This procedure will look different at each grade level. Speak to a colleague who knows your group the best.

3. My class has quite a few health issues. What do I need to know about administering medication?

The necessary procedures and protocols are described in Policy 704 - Health Support Services. However, each school will have its own internal routines for administering the policy, so it is best to contact your school administration for further details.

4. I am very concerned about the behaviour of a student in my classroom. It has changed significantly, and I am not sure what to do. Who should I contact?

Contact someone in guidance and/or admin about your concerns.

5. Can I paint my classroom?

The short answer is no. If you do want to have changes made to the physical appearance of your classroom, then contact your administration.

6. I am hearing negative discussions about students in the staffroom, and it is really bothering me. What should I do?

Don't engage in the discussion.

7. What if my students don't like me?

There is a big difference between like and respect. You will never have all of your students like you, so live with it! On the other hand, it is important that they respect you (and that most, not all, like you). Students can "like" a teacher but not respect him/ her. Respect is a two-way street. You must earn the respect from your students from day one. You do this by showing the students that you are a fair and consistent teacher, that you care about them and their success, and that you will always listen to what they have to say.

8. At what point is it okay to send a student to the Principal's office because of his/her behaviour or attitude in class?

There are certain steps that need to be taken before sending a student to the office for most forms of misbehaviour. First, talk to the student individually about the problem in a calm but firm way and ask for his/her input on the situation. If after you have talked with the student, the behaviour is still there, call home and inform the parent/guardian of the situation (ask for suggestions). If the problem still persists, invite the student to a team meeting (if you work on a team with other teachers who teach him/ her), or arrange a meeting with the student, an administrator, and yourself to discuss the problem. However, serious misconduct (as identified in your school's positive learning environment plan or discipline code), may require an immediate intervention from an administrator.

9. One student keeps giving me a hard time. The student is always disruptive and doesn't show me any respect. The student claims I pick on him/her. Other teachers don't seem to have a problem with that students. What do I do?

You will need to have a conference with the student and emphasize that it is not the student that you dislike but rather a specific behaviour. Focus on positive aspects of the student (you are a natural leader; you are such a strong math student; I always like your ideas). Try to agree on a "fresh start", then provide positive feedback in the next weeks. You still, however, need to hold the student accountable for unacceptable behaviour.

Becoming a Professional

1. I've noticed that there are some unwritten laws about where to sit for lunch, where to park ... in general, how things happen around the school. How do I know what I should do and what I shouldn't do?

What you have noticed is an aspect of school culture, or "the way we do things around here". Understanding the culture of a school is essential

for a beginner, as it informs new teachers about "norms" (accepted practices and behaviours) about dress, conduct, roles, etc. There may be aspects of a school's culture that make you feel uncomfortable (i.e., a "culture of complaint"). Be encouraged to differ from the school culture when you feel that it compromises your ideals. Be cautious and reflective about how you can bring about change in a situation like this. As a beginner, you may decide that the most important difference you can make is to not participate, especially in "negative talk".

2. I'm really nervous about the principal coming to observe and evaluate me. How can I prepare for this?

Talk about being pro-active. Invite your principal in before they initiate it. Don't shy away from feedback – seek it from a variety of sources – this is effective professional growth. If you have the equipment, video taping yourself teaching a class and afterward watching it is a great way to selfassess.

3. Is it okay for me to have social media accounts as a teacher?

It is okay to have social media accounts as a teacher. It is important to have your privacy settings limit who can see your accounts, but keep in mind that everything can become public. It is also important to remember that you are a teacher 24/7 and should always weigh carefully what you post. Teachers should not be "friends" with students on social media and should communicate with students in a professional manner through appropriate channels.

4. I am having a personality conflict with a fellow staff member. I am concerned that this conflict may become unprofessional. What are our rights and responsibilities when it comes to conflict with a colleague?

Refer to the Code of Professional Conduct and seek advice from your administrator on how to deal with the conflict.

Communicating with Parents

1. Is it okay to communicate with parents through email? I have a parent who repeatedly emails me. What can I do about this?

Email is an effective tool for communicating information. However, for most communication regarding students, communication should occur by telephone or face-to-face. If a parent repeatedly emails, call the parent to address any questions or concerns the parent indicated in the email. Advise the parent of online resources if they want continual updates on marks, assignments, or homework, and ask them to call instead of emailing if the reason is anything other than factual information. If the emails continue, consult with your administrator. The administrator may want to speak with the parent directly.

2. How often should I make contact with parents regarding their child's progress?

The amount depends on how well the student is progressing. However, teachers should always attempt to call parents within the first couple weeks to introduce themselves and to provide contact information. It is important for parents not to feel they are only contacted about behavioural issues. There are many ways to maintain regular contact with parents, including letters home, newsletters indicating what your class is doing in each subject area, emails, websites or virtual classrooms, Parent Nights, and Open Houses.

3. What do you do when a parent/guardian is confrontational with you (in person, on the phone, or virtually)?

In a situation where you feel uneasy, it is always best to remain calm. You should not feel obligated to listen to verbal abuse. Calmly end the conversation and suggest another time you could talk to discuss the issue. If it's virtual, do not reply. Do not feel alone in a situation where you are uncomfortable. Involve the principal or vice-principal to assist you and to perhaps be a third party. Refer to this document: <u>If Conflict</u> <u>Arises</u>

4. What do you do when a parent/guardian arrives uninvited to your classroom and he/ she wants to discuss a concern or problem?

If a parent/guardian arrives while you are teaching, you should suggest another time to meet. If the matter is of an urgent nature and the parent/ guardian needs to speak to someone, invite your principal to address the problem or to supervise your class.

5. A parent wants to have a meeting with me, but I'm concerned that the parent's tone is inappropriate.

If a teacher feels uncomfortable meeting with a parent, that teacher should ask an administrator or other teacher to be in the room with them. Seek advice on best practices regarding conferences with parents/guardians to ensure you are prepared for this meeting.

Group Insurance

1. How do I know whether I was automatically enrolled in the group insurance program?

If you have been automatically enrolled, you should see a deduction amount under code 18 on your pay stub. If you do, this means that you have been enrolled in the single life, single health, basic critical illness, and salary continuation plans. If you wish to add family coverage and/ or dental, please contact Johnson Inc. If there is no deduction in code 18, please contact Johnson Inc. asap.

2. Are these plans mandatory, or do I have a choice to opt out of any or all of the plans?

None of the NBTF group insurance plans are mandatory and you can opt-out at any time, subject to certain conditions. Please contact Johnson Inc. for more information.

3. If I opt out, what happens if I wish to re-apply at a later date?

To re-apply for coverage, you must be actively at work and complete an application form and you may be subject to medical evidence. Please contact Johnson Inc. for more complete details on how to re-apply.

4. My contract is done in June. What happens to my group insurance coverage?

Coverage is continued during summer as long as you are still receiving pay throughout the summer months. Coverage and premiums should resume with a new contract and medical evidence is not required. Check you pay stub to ensure appropriate deductions are being made. Contact Johnson Inc. to obtain all the necessary information on how to proceed.

5. How do I obtain detailed information on what is covered under the group insurance plan?

You can contact Johnson Inc. directly for inquiries and obtain a benefit booklet from them or visit www.johnson.ca and visit the members only site. Once you have a username and password, you can access complete benefit descriptions, claims information, print personalized claim forms and income tax letters from the site. It is important to check your pay stub to see if deductions are being taken for insurance.

6. How do I submit for reimbursement of an insurance claim?

Johnson Inc. processes claims usually within four days of receiving them in the mail. You can submit your claim online and request that your reimbursement be automatically deposited into your bank account by contacting them and providing a void cheque. <u>https://www.johnson.</u> <u>ca/</u>

Claims: 1-800-442-4428

Admin: 1-888-851-5500