

Teacher training survival guide

By trainee teachers, for trainee teachers



*One child, one teacher,
one book, one pen
can change the world.*

- Malala Yousafzai



Essential items for trainees



Simon:

"Always have a notebook with you. When you see something you like, note it down. It could be anything, from the way a teacher introduces a lesson, or the way they transition a class back in after outside break. Go over your notes later and put these good things into your own teaching practice."



Kirsty:

"Take a phone to lectures, if things are going quickly then you can photograph the slide and add it into your notes".

Must-have items:

Binders

There will be a lot of paperwork to organise

Organisational planner

Keep yourself and the class on schedule

Post it notes

Perfect for reminders

Different coloured pens

Essential for marking

Your own glue stick

They're like gold dust in the classroom

Smart comfy shoes

You'll be getting those steps in for sure!

Highlighters

Mark the key bits in your lecture notes or textbook

Pocket notebook

Write down what the teachers are doing so you can try it too

Printer

Makes things a lot easier if you have one at home

Things to know before starting out



Simon:

"I'm not a full-time teacher yet but, just from placement, I know how full-on it can be. In teaching you work before you go to work, you work at work, and then you work when you get home from work. I still love it, but you need to figure out what work needs doing to not overwork yourself."



Kirsty:

"It's a misconception that it's easy to teach a child. You need to know where they're going wrong, but there isn't always an answer for everything. It's okay to admit you're not sure and suggest looking it up and finding out together. It's alright not to know everything."

Staying organised



Simon:

"I use the calendar on my phone to put in my lectures and placement dates. I'm a whiteboard guy, that was useful, being able to see everything in one place."



Kirsty:

"I keep a diary of everything I need to do and make a checklist of what I want to have done by the end of the day. I have a massive planner as well to make sure everything gets done!"

Get set for placement success



Simon:

"At the start it's that feeling of trying to fit in. Although you know your place as a trainee teacher, it's trying to find your place in the school. And then, building up the confidence to teach; you know you can do it, but having 30 children sat in front of you may be something to get used to. As soon as you get to know the children, the teachers, and the rest of the staff, you know they're nothing to fear. It's a new environment, you need to ease into it."



Kirsty:

"Look into the after-school clubs, they're great to get into. Get yourself involved in extracurricular activities; this will provide you with so many more opportunities."



Simon:

"Take time for yourself. Everyone says it, everyone struggles with it. Having a work-life balance and something to look forward to at the weekend or in an evening is so important. Just giving yourself an hour to do something you really want to do helps to keep everything in perspective."

"It's all about being adaptable. Lessons won't always go to plan but in the end everything comes together so it's okay!"



*Intelligence
plus character-
that is the goal
of true education.*

- Martin Luther King Jr



Creating good relationships with students



Kirsty:

"Try and be as friendly and approachable as you can. There are some things that the children will be happier to tell you than the teacher. Like sometimes they're happier to ask you if they can go to the toilet, because you're more likely to say yes, but don't be a push over!"



Simon:

"It's all about first impressions. Have a smile on your face when they first walk in the door. To them, you're this big new person they don't know. Just talk to them, especially in the first week. I like to talk to each pupil and learn what they like, what they don't like. Take the time to ask them about them; but don't ask 'What are you doing in English?', keep it open and ask things like 'How are you doing?' instead."

What to wear



Kirsty:

"For lectures I dress casually. I'm a PE trainee so usually I'm in leggings and a sports top. For placements, I'm quite formal, usually black slacks and a blouse. A big difference between the two."



Simon:

"For lectures, I'm always in shorts. There is no strict dress code. Dress code for placement depends on your school but it's always a professional look. For me, both placements have been shirts and while I've not had to wear a tie, I sometimes put one on. Some schools want you to wear their polo tops. Ask about dress code and it helps when you see what the rest of the staff are wearing".

The best bits



Simon:

"The best bit is when you have had a class and you get to see the development of the children. Seeing their progression was the most rewarding thing for me."



Kirsty:

"It's great when you're able to implement what you've learnt in the lecture on your placement, and you find out what works for you and what doesn't. Maybe at first something doesn't quite go right but then you try again and it's a bit better that time. Seeing yourself progress, and the children, is so rewarding."

Wellbeing tips

- Have something outside of teaching to look forward to
 - even just watching a movie
- Maintain a healthy sleep schedule
- Plan in advance – school days can be busy and unpredictable, so be prepared!
- Put the time in to build good relationships with staff and students in your placement schools
- Get a support system – training is full-on, and you'll welcome the support of fellow trainees, family, and friends
- Know what mental health and wellbeing support is offered by your placement school and university

Last words of advice



"Make use of your personal tutor at uni. I love mine. She is so nice and helpful with any issues I have. They are always willing to talk to you about anything."



"Jump at every opportunity you get. Everyone wants you to succeed. Build relationships on your course, they help. Talking about what you've learnt helps you learn it better."