



**New Teacher**

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union

# Handbook *for* Early Career Teachers

*Helping you to thrive in your learning space*

NSTU Professional Learning



# CODE OF ETHICS

This Code of Ethics is a guide to Members in maintaining at all times the high integrity of their profession including professional conduct in relation to all communication whether verbal, written or via social media.

## A. Member and Pupil/Parent/Guardian

- I. The Member regards as confidential, and does not divulge other than through professional channels, any information of a personal or domestic nature, concerning either pupils or home, obtained through the course of professional duties.
- II. The Member should be just, equitable, and fair in all relationships with pupils/parents/guardians.
- III. The Member should assume responsibility for the safety and welfare of pupils, especially under conditions of emergency.
- IV. The Member should avoid giving offence to the moral principles of pupils and/or their parents/guardians.
- V. The Member should be as objective and respectful as possible in dealing with controversial matters.
- VI. The Member should not accept remuneration for tutoring their pupils except under compelling circumstances and with the approval of their supervisor or principal.

## B. Member and Member/Colleague

- I. The Member should not make defamatory, disparaging, condescending, embarrassing, or offensive comments concerning another Member or colleague.
- II. The Member shall not make derogatory remarks about the professional competence of another Member or colleague.
- III. The Member shall not accept a position arising out of the unsettled dispute between Members, and their employers.
- IV. The Member shall not sexually, physically, or emotionally harass another Member or colleague.



## *The Nova Scotia Teachers Union welcomes your feedback on this handbook.*

Contact the Professional Learning Department of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. Telephone 1-800- 565-6788 toll free, or 902-477-5621 locally; or fax 902-477-3517; or e-mail [appl@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:appl@staff.nstu.ca).

### ***Acknowledgements***

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The Nova Scotia Teachers Union would also like to acknowledge the many new teachers from across the province who responded to drafts of the original document.

New teacher handbooks from the *Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation*, the *Manitoba Teachers' Society* and the *Alberta Teachers' Association* provided inspiration for the writing of this handbook.

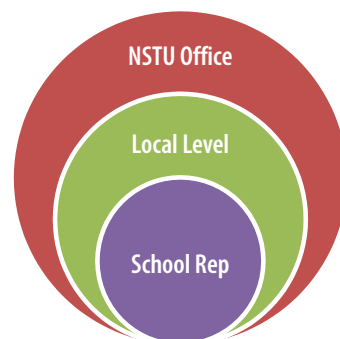
For colleagues past and present and former students who have inspired the newest additions and edits to this resource, Merci beaucoup, Wela'liq and Tapadh Leat!

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union would also like to acknowledge the contribution of the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

### ***Contacting the NSTU for Information***

Keep in mind that you may contact the **Nova Scotia Teachers Union** for information or advice about any professional problem and you are strongly urged to do so.

- At the **school level**, check with your NSTU representative.
- At the **Local level** contact your Local President. All Local Presidents' contact numbers as well as emails for all NSTU staff are located in the NSTU Member Diary, which is distributed to all contract teachers each September and available at [nstu.ca](http://nstu.ca).
- **Provincially**: Call 1-800-565-6788 or 902-477-5621 and the receptionist will put you in contact with an appropriate staff officer depending on your particular situation.



Mailing address: 3106 Joseph Howe Drive,  
Halifax, NS B3L 4L7 [www.nstu.ca](http://www.nstu.ca)  
[appl@nstu.ca](mailto:appl@nstu.ca)







# Handbook *for* Early Career Teachers

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# Welcome to the NSTU

*The Nova Scotia Teachers Union is **your**  
professional organization*

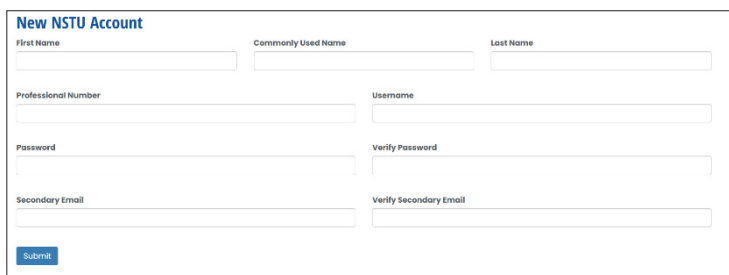


# YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL IN A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION

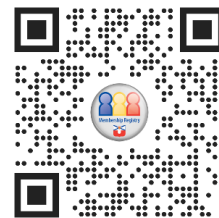
As a certified teacher, you assume a professional status. This status carries with it a set of behavioural expectations, which are outlined by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union in its Code of Ethics. This Code is provided as a guide to teachers in maintaining at all times the high tradition of the profession.

You will find the Code of Ethics on the inside cover of this book.

As a new member of the NSTU, you must create an account with us! To activate an account, please visit: <https://nstu.ca/NstuAccounts/Signup>.



Once you've completed this form, you will be assigned a username and password that you can then use to sign in to our Membership Registry to complete your Member Profile. This will allow us to contact you with important union related information!



The [Nova Scotia Teaching Standards](#) were established in 2018. These standards guide your practice and professional growth as set out by the Education and Early Childhood Development Department.

The six standards:

- Teachers know, respond to, and engage all students.
- Teachers know the subjects they teach and how to teach them.
- Teachers use 'Assessment for and of Learning' to guide teaching and learning.
- Teachers create safe and positive learning environments.
- Teachers participate in professional learning throughout their careers.
- Teachers model and promote professionalism in teaching.

## Wondering how to become more involved?

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union was founded in 1895 “to unify and elevate the teaching profession and improve the quality of education offered to the young people of Nova Scotia.” More than 125 years later, we continue to stand by that undertaking. As your professional organization, the **NSTU relies on the commitment and involvement of its members so that our voice remains strong in support of public education.** If you are interested in learning more, please see the following list of opportunities and contact your school rep, attend a Local meeting and/or contact the Professional Learning department to find out more!



As a democratic union, the NSTU encourages every member to participate and share in its development. To do so, the Union provides you with opportunities to become involved at many levels. NSTU involvement can be divided into two categories:



## Profiles of Union Involvement:

<p><b><i>NSTU Representative</i></b></p> <p>Every school has at least one NSTU rep who can either answer your question or put you in contact with someone who can.</p>	<p><b><u><i>NSTU Grants and Opportunities</i></u></b></p> <p>Apply for funds to support your professional learning through conference grants, Educational Research awards, Full Time study grants, travel fellowships for educational travel. Growth Grants, PDAF and Project Overseas.</p>
<p><b><i>Local Meetings</i></b></p> <p>The NSTU is divided into twenty-two locals. Check with your NSTU rep to see when and where your Local holds its general meetings and plan to attend. Many Locals also have Social Media accounts! Make sure to follow them to receive important information about meetings and events in your area. You will learn a lot and broaden your circle of professional colleagues at the same time.</p>	<p><b><u><i>NSTU Workshops/Presentations</i></u></b></p> <p>NSTU staff are available to facilitate workshops on a variety of different topics and new offerings are being added. Be sure to check back often for updates and to follow NSTU PL on Social Media! @NSTUAPPL</p>
<p><b><i>Local Committees</i></b></p> <p>Some Locals have a number of standing committees, and they are always looking for extra help. Through committee experience you will gain organizational and administrative experience that will enhance your professional capacity.</p>	<p><b><u><i>Professional Associations conferences</i></u></b></p> <p>Teacher volunteers from across the province gather to organize an annual conference for their colleagues on the fourth Friday in October each year. There are 21 different conferences happening on that date. Watch for posters in staff rooms, social media and the nstu website.</p>
<p><b><i>Local Executive</i></b></p> <p>The Local Executive is made up of teachers elected by fellow teachers to conduct the business of the Local. Roles of the Local Executive: President, 1st Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, VPs of Professional Learning, Communications/PA and PR, Members-at-large)</p>	





## Forums for Regional and Provincial Participation

Once you are involved at the Local level you will become aware of opportunities for involvement either regionally or provincially. Committees, professional associations, focus groups, annual council, provincial executive... all these depend on the involvement and commitment of members like you.

Governance	Professional Learning
<p><b><i>Regional Representative Council (RRC)</i></b></p> <p>The RRC is made up of representatives from the Locals within the boundaries of a geographical regional employer. The RRC deals directly with the regional employer.</p>	<p><b><i>Professional Associations</i></b></p> <p>The NSTU has twenty-one professional associations. They are the means by which the Union serves the needs of its members in the area of curriculum and professional development. To become a member of the professional association of your choice, you can attend their Annual General Meeting during the conference to learn more. Executive members of Professional Associations meet regularly during the year to plan their conferences. They are also invited to attend the Annual Leadership Development Institute in August as well as the Professional Associations Leaders Conference in November of each year.</p>
<p><b><i>Regional Economic Welfare Committee (REWC)</i></b></p> <p>The REWC is made up of the 1st Vice- Presidents/ Economic Welfare Chairs from the Locals within the boundaries of a geographical regional employer. The REWC deals works with the RRC Chair on matters concerning working conditions and works to develop asking packages and negotiates regional agreements with the support of their assigned Staff Officer in Member Services</p>	
<p><b><i>Provincial Committees</i></b></p> <p>The NSTU has a number of standing committees, as well as issue-based ad hoc committees, to which NSTU members can apply. Selection is based on several criteria including regional representation, grade level, gender, and experience.</p>	
<p><b><i>Provincial Executive</i></b></p> <p>The Provincial Executive comprises teachers elected from across the province to represent NSTU members. They meet monthly and direct the business of the Union between Councils. A list of Provincial Executive members can be found in the Member Diary.</p>	
<p><b><i>Annual Council</i></b></p> <p>Delegates are chosen from each Local to attend Annual Council, held each May. Council determines the policy which directs the NSTU between councils. Members can attend as part of their Local (as a voting delegate, alternate voting delegate or observer-someone who has never attended council before), as Chair of a Committee (observer role) or as a Leader of a Professional Association (voting delegate).</p>	
<p>To obtain information on applying for NSTU committees or other involvement opportunities, check <a href="#">The Teacher</a> or contact the NSTU central office.</p>	



## NEW TEACHER INITIATIVES



FROM THE  
NSTU

Your Professional Learning team at the NSTU is welcoming feedback and suggestions during this year to reinvigorate our programming for our newest members.

Please reach out and share your ideas at [appl@nstu.ca](mailto:appl@nstu.ca)

Our current programming will continue! Contact your NSTU School Rep for more information about New Member events in your area:

***New Member Page on the NSTU Website** (see the QR Code on the keychain of your “Welcome to the NSTU” lanyard!)*

***Benefits of Membership Sessions:** Sessions are designed to answer the question, “What do I get for my Union dues?”*

***This Handbook for Early Career Teachers: Helping You to Survive & Thrive in the Classroom** Local New Teacher Committees*

***Welcome Night for New Teachers in your Local** (where you teach)*



# NOVA SCOTIA TEACHER CERTIFICATION

There are five classes of certification:

Certification Classification	Abbreviation	Prior certification equivalence
Initial Teacher's Certificate	ITC	TC5
Advanced Teacher's Certificate 1	ATC1	TC6
Advanced Teacher's Certificate 2	ATC2	TC7
Advanced Teacher's Certificate 3	ATC3	TC8
Conditional Teacher's Certificate	CTC	

## Objectives of Continuing Service Education:

1. Responding to specific educational needs
2. Addressing school responsibilities such as administration, curriculum or staff development
3. Provide for extension of subject area knowledge or pedagogy

**The requirements for any Advanced Teacher's Certificate are the qualifications for the immediately preceding Teacher's Certificate and one of the following Three Ways to Upgrade**

- Degree Program
- Certificate Program
- Integrated Program

## The Degree Program involves:

1. A graduate diploma
2. A Master's Degree in
  - a. A teachable subject
  - b. Education
3. A Doctoral Degree

## The Certificate Program involves:

- Five (5) university courses
- Either undergraduate or graduate level in
  - Academic disciplines
  - Professional studies



## The Integrated Program involves:

- Developed by a teacher in consultation with a university
- Any interrelated combination of academic and professional courses
- Five (5) full courses at a university or community college
  - With a minimum of three (3) full graduate courses and a maximum of two (2) full undergraduate courses
- Teachers may use the Integrated Program option only once for certification purposes.

## Conditional Teacher's Certificate

Conditional Teacher's Certificates are granted to teachers who do not meet all of the requirements for an Initial Teacher's Certificate.

They are available only to a person who:

- Does not meet the qualifications for an Initial Teacher's Certificate; and
- Has completed at least 4 years of undergraduate study; and
- Has completed an approved bachelor's degree from a recognized university OR qualifications from a recognized university that the Registrar considers to be equivalent to such a degree; and
- Has completed an approved program of professional studies that consists of a minimum of 30 credit hours or course work including practicum; or
- Does not meet the qualification for an Initial Teacher's Certificate but holds a conditional or temporary teacher's certificate granted by an authority in a Canadian jurisdiction outside Nova Scotia.

**Always obtain prior approval from the Registrar before starting any certification upgrade program!**

## Where to find information:

- Certification Website: <https://certification.ednet.ns.ca/>
- Registrar
  - Phone: (902) 424-6620
  - Fax: (902) 424-3814
  - E-mail address: [certification@novascotia.ca](mailto:certification@novascotia.ca)
- University Education Departments
- Nova Scotia Teachers Union
  - Phone: 477-5621 or 1-800-565-6788
  - Fax: (902) 477-3517
  - E-mail address: [certification@nstu.ca](mailto:certification@nstu.ca)





## INSURANCE BENEFITS

### How do you make sure you're enrolled?

- belairdirect receives a new member data form from each Regional Employer. Once this form is received, belairdirect will send each new member an Insurance Profile with complete details of each plan plus an enrolment package which includes various application forms.
- The NSTU has negotiated for active members, payment by the Employer for 100% of the Union Total Care Medical Plan, Single and Family Policy. Coverage under the Total Care Medical Plan is not automatic. The forms to enroll are included in the enrolment package.



#### Dental coverage:

The NSTU has negotiated for active members, payment by the Employer for 65% of the Union Total Care Dental Plan, Single and Family Plan. **You have until October 15th** of a given year to enrol in the NSTU Dental Plan. Coverage is effective the first of the month following receipt of the application form.

Details of the plan and an enrolment form are contained in the enrolment package. In the event that you are presently in the plan and wish to discontinue coverage, you should send written confirmation of cancellation prior to September 30th of the year in question. **If you are hired after August 1st, you have 30 calendar days to submit your paperwork to be enrolled.**

### How do I designate a beneficiary?

The NSTU has negotiated for each active member, payment by the Employer for purchase of a Union Life and Accidental Death & Dismemberment Policy. Your enrolment package will include a Provincial Master Life Designation of Beneficiary Form. It is very important that every member designate a beneficiary.

The NSTU Group Insurance Plan includes Long Term Disability insurance for all active members. Coverage will be effective the date you commence employment as a term, probationary or permanent contact teacher. All new teachers will be automatically enrolled into the NSTU Long Term Disability Program and premiums will be automatically deducted. The employer shall pay 50 percent (50%) of the monthly premium of this benefit.

### Other Group Insurance Possibilities

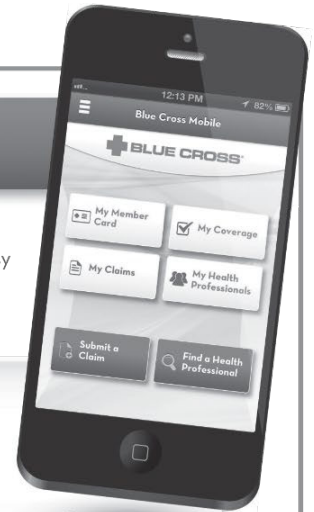
Members may purchase, at group rates, additional life insurance. Other group plans at member's option and payment include accidental death and dismemberment, travel insurance, and automobile and home insurance. These can be paid through payroll deductions.



# Take us with you!



You have our card in your wallet—now you can take us with you on your smartphone, too. Our new mobile app ensures you have fast, reliable and easy access to everything you need to access your Medavie Blue Cross benefits—*anytime, anywhere.*



## What can Medavie Blue Cross Mobile do for you?



### Submit a claim

Filing a claim has never been quicker or easier. Submit your claims through the app and have your reimbursement deposited directly to your bank account. *(Currently for Group plan members with access to the secure member site only)*



### View past claims

Look up past claims you've submitted and family claims history in one convenient location.



### Browse coverage

Not sure which services and products you're covered for? Browse coverage to view benefit details and provisions. You can even find out if that new prescription is covered before you leave the doctor's office.



### Find a health professional

Need an optometrist? What about a chiropractor? Using GPS-style navigation, find an approved health professional near you – whether you're close to home or travelling.



### Save your favourites

Your dentist... your pharmacy... that chiropractor you need to make an appointment with... keep them all together in My Health Professionals for quick reference and easy calling.



### Access a mobile ID card

An electronic version of your ID card displays before you even login to the app. Simply show this mobile version to your health professional as proof of coverage—no more digging in your wallet.

## No access to a smartphone?

You still have lots of options to submit your claims—both electronic and paper-based:



Login to our secure member site to submit your claims electronically through our new eClaims system.



Mail your claim.



Or, if they're registered for online billing, have your provider submit your claim for you.



Download Medavie Blue Cross Mobile free for iPhone, Android and BlackBerry 10



[medavie.bluecross.ca/app](http://medavie.bluecross.ca/app)



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# Wellness

*Our wellness depends not only on our lifestyle and how we cope with the physical demands we put on ourselves, but also on the emotional demands.*



<b>Asking for Help versus Doing It All Yourself</b>	You are a trained teacher with new ideas and information. Situations or concerns may come up that you do not know how to handle. Ask others and ask early. It is not a sign of incompetence to ask questions. Other people have experience in areas that you are not yet acquainted with. Asking early may save you a lot of grief and a lot of time.
<b>Helping Others and Helping Yourself</b>	Are you someone who is always there to help others, even if it takes time away from what you want or need to do? Helping others is a good thing unless it is to your detriment. When this occurs, resentment sets in and eventually leads to problems in relationships. If you worry about everyone else's needs, you will not have any time to meet your own.
<b>Setting Boundaries</b>	It is all right to say “no” to too many extracurricular activities or assignments. Beginning teachers often think they have to do everything that is asked of them and do it well. There are just so many hours in a day and you have just so much energy. If it is too much for you, say so. It doesn't help anyone for you to be so stretched that you cannot do anything well.
<b>Maintaining Perspective</b>	The first years of teaching are like being on an emotional roller coaster—you move from exhilaration to disillusionment many times. Remember that this is normal, so try to maintain a balance—and don't become discouraged.
<b>Are there any (in) valuable lessons that that you have learned?</b>	





## Who are the resource people in your neighbourhood – for you and your students!

*(this is NOT an exhaustive list! Add your own supports in the middle!)\**



## School/RCE/Board-Based Team Members:

<p><b><i>Resource/Learning Centre Teachers</i></b></p>	<p>These teachers can help you to design appropriate learning activities for special needs children. In some cases, these teachers also operate programs which may take special needs children out of your classroom for part of the day or week. A resource or learning centre teacher can be an important part of your support system. Find an early opportunity to meet them and discuss how you can best work together.</p>
<p><b><i>School Counsellor(s)</i></b></p>	<p>School Counsellors provide integral support for the Personal, Social and Academic and Career development goals of our students, and, therefore, are a central part of any student team. School Counsellors can provide important information for supporting the well-being of our students as well as information that will help support students' transitions from one grade level to the next as well as to support their goals for post-graduation.</p>
<p><b><u><i>School Administrators</i></u></b></p>	<p>Our School Administrators have important experience and knowledge to share when supporting our students and their role in supporting Teachers and their school staff is highlighted in the new Educational Leadership Standards. These standards, presented in a circular model, speak to the components of Leadership that encompass the role of a School Administrator: Leading for Equity and Inclusion, Leading Ethically and Professionally, Leading Teaching and Learning, Leading a Collaborative Learning Culture, Leading a Safe and Positive Environment, Leading Change for Improvement, Leading, Engaging and Empowering Partners, Leading and Managing Operations and Procedures.</p>
<p><b><i>Educational (Program) Assistants</i></b></p>	<p>Teacher assistants are commonly assigned to a school under the direction of a teacher/principal to work with a child/children identified as having individual needs which necessitate the use of additional services and supports. The teacher assistant may be supporting mainstreamed students in an integrated environment, assisting in a regular classroom, assisting in a resource classroom, or may be attached to a work experience program or resource program. The work settings are solely based on the identified needs of the system, program, and/or student to provide sound, quality, appropriate educational opportunities for students. The NSTU maintains that only teachers can be responsible for programs and program delivery. The teacher's responsibility to students and for educational decision-making is not changed by the addition of teacher assistants. Teacher assistants can assist, but they should not be assigned to the program; rather, they should be assigned to a student or teacher.</p>



<b><i>Library Staff</i></b>	Teacher librarians, library technicians, and other library staff do more than look after the collection of library materials—they can assist you in cooperative planning and help you design research-based projects and information retrieval programs. Be sure to familiarize yourself with policies about using the resource center, but also take advantage of the staff's ability to help you develop resource-based learning strategies to enhance instruction. Your library staff may also assist you in ordering student and teacher resource materials. Many teaching materials are available through the government's <a href="#">Authorized Learning Resources catalogue</a> . The ALR catalogue is updated annually.
<b><i>School Administrative Assistant</i></b>	The school Administrative Assistant is an important link between you and the administration. Learn about the secretary's responsibilities and what services might be available to you. Requests made of you by the school Administrative Assistant are frequently for information required by the principal. Remember that these people have deadlines to meet as well and they appreciate promptness.
<b><i>Custodial Staff</i></b>	A good working relationship with the school custodians will make life much easier for you. Ask the principal about the caretaker's responsibilities. Introduce yourself and discuss ways in which you can work together to keep your classroom a pleasant place for you and your students.
<b><i>Bus Drivers</i></b>	Our bus drivers carry an immense responsibility to ensure the safety of our students to and from our learning spaces each day. As such, they can also be an important part of a student's team to help support their success.
<b><i>Cafeteria Staff</i></b>	We know that students do not always arrive to our learning spaces well nourished. Together with the school team, food services staff can help to ensure that our students have access to healthy food choices to help them be present during their school day.
<b><i>Mentors and Coaches</i></b>	Many RCEs and the CSAP have Mentors and Coaches available to support teachers' professional growth. Some mentors and coaches are subject-based while others' services offer support to teachers in the early part of their career as well as in areas such as Equity and Diversity, Assessment and other areas. Who are the mentors in your Regional Centre/Board? They can be an important support for you as move through your teaching career.



<b><u><i>School Psychologists</i></u></b>	School Psychologists are another central part of our student support system. From critical assessments to support learning needs to providing detailed information to support students' well-being and academic growth, School Psychologists are another cornerstone of holistic student support.
<b><u><i>Speech Language Pathologists</i></u></b>	Speech Language pathologists offer a highly specialized service to our students who may struggle from any number of challenges when interpreting and producing language. Through the use of resources and tools to assess and teach language acquisition strengths and challenges, SLPs are a valuable member of a student's team.
<b><u><i>APSEA</i></u></b>	The Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority is a team of teachers who work with students who have hearing or visual impairments. Like the other team members mentioned here, these teachers offer highly specialized services to our students and our teachers in terms of sharing information, strategies and resources to help our students succeed.

### **Education Partners:**

<b><u><i>Schools Plus</i></u></b>	Schools Plus is a team of education partners that offer support to students and their families to support well-being and learning. The program is expanding throughout the province, with different services offered in different areas. Consult the Schools Plus webpage by clicking the link to the left for more information about what Schools Plus looks like in your RCE/ Board.
<b><u><i>Nova Scotia Public Health</i></u></b>	Some schools in Nova Scotia have a community Health Nurse who is available to students during the school day. This is a partnership with



## Community Relationships:

<p><i>Elders</i></p>	<p>When we consider the relationships that we build as teachers, we must always work to connect with Elders in our region who represent and are deeply connected to our students. A student’s story is intrinsically linked to their community and for our relationships with our students to be as strong as possible, community elders must play a vital role in our teaching practice. Whether it is an invitation to our learning space or a school-wide event, Elders provide powerful insight into the lives of our students and can help to foster growth through learning and sharing of their culture and history.</p>
<p><i>Community Members</i></p>	<p>Community members can also play a vital role in supporting our students and our teaching practice. By developing partnerships with community members and organizations, we can help our students to connect their learning in ever-expanding ways.</p>
<p><i>RCMP</i></p>	<p>Like Public Health and Schools Plus, partnerships with the RCMP look different around our province and within our respective RCEs and Board. Whether it is a community education officer or other connection(s), partnerships with the RCMP can offer students a chance to learn about the role that policing and security plays in our community and expand their understanding.</p>
<p><i>Big Brothers Big Sisters</i></p>	<p>This community organization allows youth to participate in mentorship opportunities, which can support their growth and development in numerous ways. Sometimes BBBS will visit the school and sometimes they will offer programming after school or on weekends. Like the other organizations and partners mentioned here, the services offered by BBBS can have lasting positive impacts for our students.</p>
<p><i>Any human resources to add?</i></p>	





# Professional Learning

*You have a professional responsibility to keep yourself up to date with new developments in education and to take part in ongoing professional learning.*



# PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

## Growing with the NSTU



21 Professional associations made up of teachers and volunteers who plan Professional Learning for their colleagues that is next to none! Consider attending the association's AGM during conference day to learn about how you can get involved!



### IMPORTANT DATES

#### Grants and opportunities:

- Conference Grants (\$600 each/2-year period)
- Travel Fellowship (\$3000/3 year period)
- Education Research Award (\$500/3 year period)
- Full Time Study Grant (\$2000/3 year period)
- PDAF (up to \$5000/one-year period)
- Sheonoroil (up to \$2000)
- Project Overseas
- John Huntley Internship (2 days at the NSTU)
- Group Insurance Trustee Grants (Student Mental Health & Wellness and EduWellness Grants)



#### Learning that comes to your Local/region:

NSTU Membership	Equity and inclusion	Wellness and growth
Benefits of Membership Get your Grant On! NSTU Olympics	Gender Diversity in our Learning Spaces Cultivating Inclusive (Learning) Spaces Women in Leadership	Teacher Wellness Unleashing Unity: Strategies for Engaging & Empowering Members

This is a growing list and will have sessions added as they are developed



#### CONTACT (Conference On New Techniques in Classroom Teaching):

Annual conference that invites teachers from all four Atlantic provinces to gather and share their experience and enthusiasm for their subject area/area of interest with their colleagues. Hosted on a rotational basis: NSTU, PEITF, NLTA, NBTA. To attend on behalf of the NSTU, please CONTACT your Local president or the president of your professional association. **There are 5 seats for independent delegates. If registering for one of these spaces, you must secure funding prior to registering (article 60 and/or Local PD grants).**

**Team of Enthusiasts!!** Are you interested in offering your experience to upcoming projects with the EECD? Email your name, RCE and description of your area(s) of interest to [team@nstu.ca](mailto:team@nstu.ca).

**International Collaboration for Education (formerly Project Overseas)** are you interested in volunteering your time and talents to offer professional development in-service programs in partnership with teacher organizations in developing countries? Each year, over 50 Canadian teachers are chosen to volunteer on CTF/FCE's PO in countries throughout Africa and the Caribbean. The in-service projects take place in July. Applications open in late fall each year. Please contact the PL team at the NSTU for more information. Also, watch for advertisements in *The Teacher!*

#### AUGUST

- 1st PDAF applications due
- 1st week: CONTACT, NBTA (2025)

#### SEPTEMBER

- Second full week: Registration for PA conferences opens

#### OCTOBER

- 1st PDAF & John Huntley
- First Wednesday @ 4pm: conference grants,
- 15th: Student Mental Health and Wellness Grants (Insurance Trustees)
- 4th Friday: PA Conference Day!

#### NOVEMBER

- Biennial PD Conference (2024)
- 2nd Friday: Sheonoroil Fall Application
- International Collaboration for Education application opens

#### DECEMBER

- 1st: PDAF & John Huntley
- First Wednesday @ 4pm: Education Research Award

#### JANUARY

- 15th: EduWellness Grants for
- Member wellbeing (Insurance Trustees)
- International Collaboration for Education participants notified

#### FEBRUARY

- 1st: PDAF & John Huntley applications due

#### MARCH

- 3rd week: John Huntley session

#### APRIL

- 1st PDAF & John Huntley
- 2nd Wednesday: Full Time Study Grant;
- 2nd Friday: Sheonoroil Spring Application

#### MAY

- \*\*NEW\*\*** First Wednesday @ 4pm: conference grants; Johnsons Travel Fellowship
- Registration for CONTACT opens; NBTA hosting!!
- 31st: Student Mental Health and Wellness Project reports due

#### JUNE

- 1st PDAF applications due
- CONTACT Registration closes

#### JULY:

NSTU Office Annual shutdown

#### Who to CONTACT:

Pamela Langille,  
[pllangille@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:pllangille@staff.nstu.ca)

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Janice MacKenzie,  
[jmackenzie@staff.nstu.ca](mailto:jmackenzie@staff.nstu.ca)



## FUNDING



Funding is available to support teachers in pursuit of professional development opportunities:

### **Professional Development Fund (Article 60, TPA)**

The Union has negotiated approximately \$6,700,000 annually to be used for professional development for NSTU members. This fund is allocated to each of the seven (7) Regional Centres for Education and CSAP. The Teachers' Provincial Agreement requires the RCE/School Board to administer the fund under the directive of a Professional Development Committee. The Employer and the Union have equal representation on the committee. Expenditure guidelines are developed by the committee and these can vary from Committee to Committee. However, the guidelines are to be in compliance with Article 60. The fund shall be allocated to the following categories:

- (i) Educational Leaves of up to and including one (1) year;
- (ii) Conference Grants;
- (iii) Professional Development Grants; and
- (iv) Teacher or School Initiated In-service Education;
- (v) Authorized administrative expenses pursuant to Article 60.13.

For details on this funding and information regarding specific regional guidelines for your Area, please contact your Local.

### **Program Development Assistance Fund (PDAF)\***

As set out in Article 14 of the Provincial Collective Agreement, an annual sum of \$200,000 is allocated for the purpose of encouraging innovative program development in schools. Grants available in amounts of up to \$5000.



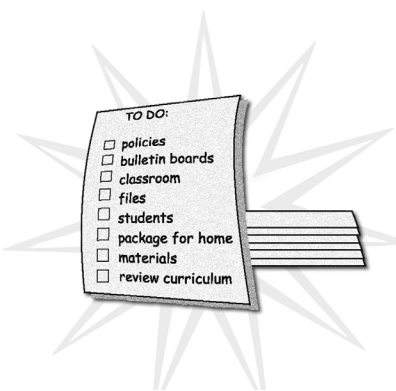


## NSTU Grants and Opportunities:

An amount is budgeted annually for Educational Research Awards, Full-Time Study Grants, and Conference Grants. The disbursement of these funds will be on the recommendation of the Professional Development Committee, ratified by the Provincial Executive at their next meeting following the committee meeting.

<p><b><i>Conference Grants</i></b></p> <p>An annual fund has been established for Conference grants to provide support to teachers wishing to attend conferences for the purpose of Professional Development. To assist the greatest number of members no grant shall exceed \$600. Applications are available on the NSTU website and from NSTU Central Office. Applications must be received at NSTU Central Office by 4:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday in <b>October and May</b>.</p>	<p><b><i>Travel Fellowships</i></b></p> <p>For teachers engaged in <b>educational travel</b> during the <b>summer</b>, a <b>total fund</b> of \$3,000 is available from belairdirect's NSTU Group Insurance for participation in seminars, workshops or conferences, but not for university courses or certification study. Each grant is valued at \$500. Deadline to apply is the 1st Wednesday in <b>May</b>.</p>
<p><b><i>Education Research Awards</i></b></p> <p>A fund has been established to encourage and assist education research. Members are awarded a maximum of \$500 based on research completed in the current or previous two school years.</p> <p>Application forms can be obtained from the NSTU Central Office or the NSTU website. Applications must be received at NSTU Central Office by 4:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday in December.</p>	<p><b><i>Sheonoroil Foundation</i></b></p> <p>The NSTU has established the Sheonoroil Foundation to provide funding grants for anti-violence programs that have a direct and immediate impact on public school classrooms, students, teachers, staff, administration and community.</p>
<p><b><i>Full-Time Study Grants</i></b></p> <p>An annual fund has been established to provide support to members wishing to follow a full-time program of studies for the purpose of Professional Development. The NSTU will award grants of \$2,000 each year. Applications are available on the NSTU website and from NSTU Central Office. Deadline for receipt of applications at the NSTU Central Office is 4:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday in April. The application can only be made for the year in which the award is to be utilized. University confirmation can follow your application.</p>	<p><b><i>John Huntley Memorial Internship Program</i></b></p> <p>The purpose of this program is to honour the contribution to the NSTU of John Huntley, who was an active Local leader as well as an Executive Staff Officer in 1993-94 and 1998-99.</p> <p>Through the provision of an internship experience for active members, this program helps fulfill Mr. Huntley's desire that all members develop a thorough understanding of the NSTU. Two days in the life of your Union...</p> <p>Three times each year, this internship enables teachers to spend two days at the provincial office connecting with executive and professional services staff to learn more about their roles and responsibilities.</p>





# Getting Started

*Summer is over and the new school year is about to begin. To make the year a meaningful one for you and your students, advance preparation is necessary*

*– here is a checklist to help you get started:*





## WORKSPACE SETUP:

Elementary	Middle/Jr High School	High School	Specialist Teachers
<p>Locate relevant <a href="#">EECD</a> documents and policies that relate to your teaching practice and bookmark or download them so that they are easy to consult for planning purposes.</p> <p>The <a href="#">Educators</a> tab opens links to curriculum documents as well as online resources.</p> <p>Get connected with <a href="#">GNSPES</a>: This launch page/Learning Commons is a hub for many of the resources that you will use on a regular basis.</p>			
<p>Inform yourself about important school and RCE/Board-based policies by discussing with your administrator. Many of these can be found in the Staff and Student Handbooks and will be discussed during the first staff meeting of the year: daily bell schedule, attendance/late arriving students, communication with students' families, fire drill and lockdown procedures, arrival times for staff, supervision of students, organizing class trips, etc.</p>			
<p><b>Prepare visuals for your learning space:</b></p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daily schedule</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Class list</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student tasks/roles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom resources and instructions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Word walls</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calendar</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Morning message</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Important reminders</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student work display</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daily schedule/routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Class list</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom expectations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Labels for classroom resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Word walls/Subject vocabulary</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calendar/Reminders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Homework/upcoming assessment and evaluation</li> <li>o Class/School activities</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daily schedule/routines</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Class list (homeroom)</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Classroom expectations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Labels for classroom resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Subject vocabulary/Visuals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calendar/Reminders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Homework/upcoming assessment and evaluation</li> <li>o Class/School activities</li> </ul> </li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Challenge questions; Thinking prompts</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Safety consideration(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Daily schedule</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Behaviour expectations for your learning space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Routines for your learning space</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Labels for classroom resources</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Visuals</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calendar/Reminders               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Class/School activities</li> <li>o Safety considerations</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



Prepare your learning and lesson materials:	Get organized!!!
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> materials needed for the first few days</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Collection record: fees/textbooks distributed/locks</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> make a checklist for forms which need to be returned</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> plan your first day in detail</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare an outline for the first week</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> develop seating plan</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> set up learning centres</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> organize your daily plan book</li> </ul>	<p>Prepare your files by setting up folders (electronic or paper) for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> late and absent notes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> parent correspondence</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> record-keeping and examples of student work</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> staff bulletins and memos</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> substitute teachers</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consult TIENET for the following information:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o students with Individual Program Plans (IPPs), adaptations</li> <li>o students needing resource support</li> <li>o students with medical conditions</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Activities and planning:**

Elementary	Middle/Jr High School	High School	Specialist Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> “All-about me” activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Skill-based activities to assess readiness reading/writing/counting/math</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare tentative seating plan/groupings for instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare an inventory to find out student interests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare tentative seating plan/groupings for instruction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare choice boards for activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare activities to assess</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> levels and skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare an inventory to find out student interests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> prepare tentative seating plan/groupings for instruction</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare choice boards for activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare activities to assess levels and skills</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare communication with students’ families outlining important grade-level and class information (activities, reading expectations, your contact information etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Prepare a communication plan that includes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Description of Grade-level work/course</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Common classroom activities</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Student Expectations</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Information on assessment and evaluation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> How to contact you during your workday</li> </ul>		

Creating a visual timeline for yourself that includes important dates and deadlines can help you to manage your time and resources effectively during the school year



## The First Day

A well-planned first day is crucial—it can set the tone for the remainder of the year. Plan for a memorable and interesting day. Learn students’ names as quickly as possible in order to personalize your teaching. Make your first day a meaningful one for you and your students by being organized, prepared and welcoming:

- Welcoming activity;
- Student information activity to get to know your new students and their goal(s) for the year;
- Classroom community building: talking circles/development of classroom norms;
- with student input/ask-it basket for student questions;
- Review classroom processes and school expectations phrased in a positive ways to outline the expected behaviours;
- explicitly teach routines as necessary;
- Have an exit card reflection activity for the end of the first day, including a guiding statement for tomorrow.



## Self-Reflection

One of the most powerful tools you have for learning is [self-reflection](#). This means examining what you do and thinking about it. It includes asking yourself why you make certain choices over others, what you observe the results to be and what else you might do. It means asking yourself how you’re feeling about your work and yourself.



- You can begin the practice of writing a positive message to yourself on the top of the next day’s page in your planbook.
- Try to make some time for yourself at the end of each day for ‘takeaways’-one positive moment and one learning moment.
- Make sure to develop your transition routine to and from your workday; how you show up for your students and how you show up for yourself in your own time is a crucial aspect to your wellbeing;

## Your Role as a Teacher

As you begin your teaching career, remember that you, the teacher, are responsible for the student learning that occurs in your classroom. Your role is to:

- choose instructional styles and techniques to engage all learners
- assess and evaluate student progress and assess achievement
- form partnerships with parents to enhance student learning, and
- select appropriate teaching and learning materials that are culturally relevant.






## The First Month

Following those first days, it is very important to support your students' transition from summer to their learning space. The next pages help to offer some strategies for cultivating an inclusive and informed learning space. There are some key components to supporting this goal:



- Fostering a sense of belonging for students. Belonging is as basic a need as food and shelter. Belonging is an essential foundation for your students' well-being and learning

What are some ways that you can foster a sense of belonging for your students? What if you asked them to help you build these ideas?

<b>Belonging in our class.....</b>	
 <b>Looks like</b>	
 <b>Sounds like</b>	
 <b>“Feels” like</b>	

Once you've determined how to foster a sense of belonging, you concentrate on a blend of explicit teaching, modeling, and interweaving these ingredients into your classroom routines, your lesson planning, your assessment and your evaluation.





# Classroom Community

*The challenge is how to maintain a positive classroom environment with a minimum of disruptions. There is no doubt that this dilemma causes more anxiety for beginning teachers than any other aspect of their new career.*



# PLANNING

As a beginning teacher the more organized you are, the greater the opportunity you will have to succeed in your classroom.

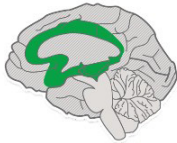
Planning is the key to successful classroom management. You will need to plan for both the content and behavioral aspects of your students' learning. With thoughtful planning in place, you will be more confident in providing quality learning experiences for your students.

## Universal Design for Learning Guidelines

The UDL Guidelines are a tool used in the implementation of Universal Design for Learning. These guidelines offer a set of concrete suggestions that can be applied to any discipline or domain to ensure that all learners can access and participate in meaningful, challenging learning opportunities.

[Visit the UDL Guidelines](#)

AFFECTIVE NETWORKS:  
THE **WHY** OF LEARNING



### Engagement

For purposeful, motivated learners, stimulate interest and motivation for learning.

[Explore Engagement](#)

RECOGNITION NETWORKS:  
THE **WHAT** OF LEARNING

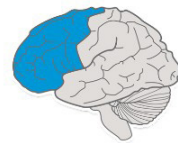


### Representation

For resourceful, knowledgeable learners, present information and content in different ways.

[Explore Representation](#)

STRATEGIC NETWORKS:  
THE **HOW** OF LEARNING

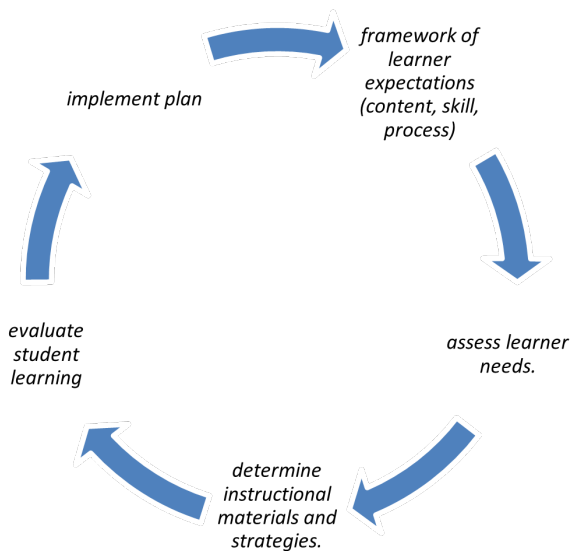


### Action & Expression

For strategic, goal-directed learners, differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.

[Explore Action & Expression](#)

## Instructional Loop



**It is a good practice to organize and carefully prepare daily lesson plans, if possible, writing up your plan before you leave school each day. In the event that you will be away, it will provide a guide for a substitute to follow.**





# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: Building Class Community and Capacity



Use the word list about to help cultivate your learning space with your students at the beginning of each year/term. You can also form your own belief statement in the space below. You can also invite students to participate by using the free version of [Mentimeter](#).



## NAVIGATING STUDENT BEHAVIOUR:

We know that behaviour as communication and expected behaviours must be modeled and explicitly taught. Not all students will arrive with the same experiences from their lives outside of school so they will need support in order to understand and manage their own behaviour.

- arrive in the classroom before students and, if possible, greet them individually as they enter (have a choice board)
- organize and prepare before each lesson
- model and foster a culture of wholesome respect
- listen to students' opinions and consider students' feelings
- maintain a sense of humor and tolerant attitude
- assist children in making appropriate choices
- teach students decision-making skills
- model flipping the script on mistakes and taking the learning forward;
- use a quiet, friendly tone of voice
- show confidence in the student; build on strengths and support challenges
- support students' development of self-esteem through capacity-building opportunities
- model consistency and fairness when addressing unexpected behaviours, ensuring that the consequences are appropriate and timely.



**YOUR approach will determine the classroom climate and the relationships with and between students. Separate the behavior from the student as an individual. Their behaviour is WHAT they do, not WHO they are.**



# A CLASSROOM ROUTINES/PROCEDURES CHECKLIST

Establishing routines and procedures is one of the most effective ways of avoiding many behaviour issues. Take the time up front to teach them well. Give lots of opportunities to practice. It will make the rest of your year go more smoothly! It takes time for routines and procedures to become habitual. **Please edit your own checklists and cross-reference with the policies and guidelines of your own RCE/Board.**

It is important to establish and model expected behaviours for the following situations:

- Entering the room;
- Homework/assignment placement
- cues or signals for getting student attention
- behaviour during PA announcements
- amount of talking required for different tasks
- dismissing the class
- accessing/distributing supplies and materials
- fire drills and emergencies (may be school-wide)
- choice of format for assignments
- permissions for accessing in-class resources;
- permission for leaving the learning space
- exiting the classroom (individually, small groups, whole- group)
- hall movement
- recess and lunch
- make-up work
- outdoor spaces/playground
- putting away supplies and equipment
- roll call, absentees, students who leave early
- student movement within the room
- what students should do when they finish early
- what to do when there is an interruption
- what do do when you are finished your work early



Remember—routines and procedures must be practiced. Give students clear directions and sufficient opportunity to practice to make the routines automatic. Practice makes possible!





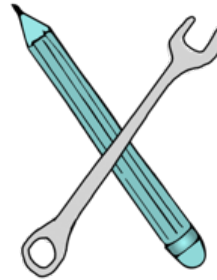
# Teaching Strategies & Classroom Composition

*On any given day, a classroom teacher may have more than 1,000 personal interactions with students. These interactions can be complex and must be as authentic as possible. The better you know your students and the stronger the connections you have with them, the better you will be able to respond appropriately to situations that arise.*

*Making time to get to know your students is a crucial part of this process; their personalities, needs, stories, strengths and challenges will help you to cultivate these connections.*



# The New Teacher Toolbox



## TEACHING VALUES

How you show up for yourself and your students each day is a very important factor in how successful your lessons and activities will be. Try to incorporate the following ideas/strategies into your professional practice for yourself and your students:

- ❑ Develop a transition activity from home to work at the beginning of your day. This will allow you to arrive in the best mindset for your workday. Try to keep thoughts as positive as possible while recognizing any potential challenges;
- ❑ Every day is a new day: for yourself and your students; try to let the previous day be a lesson learned and approach each new day as a new opportunity;
- ❑ Meeting the students where they are: this can mean many things:
  - Daily: recognize that our best (including the teacher) can and will look different each day;
  - Invite student voice to share their thoughts, opinions and questions during whole group sharing;
  - Provide opportunities for students to share/signal to you individually if they need a check-in or to share something with you;
- ❑ Develop your transition activity from work to home:
  - Ensure that you are as prepared as possible for the following day-leave yourself reminders as needed;
  - Set a firm time to finish any take-home work;
  - Make time during your trip home to shift your mindset, as needed
  - Make time for yourself as much as possible; going for walks, quiet time to “fully arrive” at home;
- ❑ Maintain a positive attitude about your subject area(s) and your work: this can be very challenging. Building in time for yourself during the workday to express concerns or discuss challenges with a trusted colleague are important. When in front of students, it’s important to try to demonstrate the qualities and skills that you want them to develop-overcoming challenges, negative mindset, working through overwhelm, etc.



## Planning:

Yearly Plan	“Unit” Plans	Daily Plans
Identify learning goals/outcomes		
Research potential modifications/adaptations for activities, assessments and evaluations		
<input type="checkbox"/> plan by month/theme/topic <input type="checkbox"/> name resources; <input type="checkbox"/> develop assessment and evaluation activities	<input type="checkbox"/> make connections with students’ experiences and outside contexts; <input type="checkbox"/> gauge your pace: it’s important to try to balance the time you have with the needs of your students;	<input type="checkbox"/> Review of previous lesson; <input type="checkbox"/> Introductory activity to bring students into the lesson <input type="checkbox"/> Main topic/activity <input type="checkbox"/> “Show what you know” opportunity to review the learning;
<input type="checkbox"/> invite student voice into the plan <input type="checkbox"/> provide choice for activities, assessments and during evaluations <input type="checkbox"/> Have a visual reminder for important dates; <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for application of acquired knowledge and skills <input type="checkbox"/> Plan a variety of activities <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities for peer conferencing to build capacity for on-topic discussion, asking and offering assistance (not giving answers) and providing constructive feedback; <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunities to display/share student work <input type="checkbox"/> Consider the use of portfolios for students to collect their work to demonstrate growth		

Learning together provides for small group work, promotes interdependence, face-to-face interaction, individual accountability and the need for increased group skills. There are a variety of approaches to grouping students for learning activities.

Instruction	Reflection
<input type="checkbox"/> provide a supportive learning environment <input type="checkbox"/> cultivate positive learning environments in collaboration with students <input type="checkbox"/> have clear expectations for your students <input type="checkbox"/> be prepared to explain the “why” of their chosen activities to students- how the content will be helpful to them outside of their learning space; <input type="checkbox"/> possess a sense of efficacy in your methods and understanding of the curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> provide opportunity for student self-evaluation and reflection <input type="checkbox"/> teach thinking skills for understanding and building capacity <input type="checkbox"/> model flexibility and adaptability <input type="checkbox"/> recognize and embrace teachable moments. <input type="checkbox"/> actively instruct their students in large and small groups	? What worked well? ? What was the key to making it work? ? What connections were made to other learning or real life? ? What unexpected connections were made? ? If I did this again, what things would I change? ? What were the best resources? ? What learner outcomes were met? How do I know? ? Teaching is challenging and exciting work. Identify your mistakes and plan to correct them. Identify your successes and build on them.



# THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM

It is the responsibility of a regional centre for education/school board to provide an education for all students in its jurisdiction. Inclusion provides social and academic opportunities for students with diverse learning needs. For students with more complex needs, there can be a provision for a teaching assistant. Other sources of assistance may be previous teacher(s), Learning Support Teachers, School Administration, mentors/coaches, consultants, family members and education partners/community resources.

What will you do as the classroom teacher to support your student who has specific learning needs and challenges?

- Consult with school-based colleagues and the student's TIENT file to gather necessary information;
- Make appropriate referrals to school and regional support personnel;
- Develop programs which are based on individual needs, in consultation with school and RCE/Board staff;
- Invite the parents to contribute in program development
- Set appropriate and realistic goals; communicate clearly with education partners and family members;
- Work as a team with support personnel, parents and administration to implement and reflect on the plan for that student throughout the year and in preparation for their next year;

Teacher assistants must neither be given responsibility for nor engage in

- Planning and initiating learning activities
- Subjective evaluation of students or their work
- Substitute teaching during the hours employed as auxiliary personnel
- Developing specific lesson plans
- Designing learning centres
- Choosing or designating learning materials
- Evaluating and selecting learning materials
- Evaluation of professional and non-professional staff
- Evaluation of school programs
- Reporting to parents
- Accessing or recording information on students' Personal Record Cards (P.R.C.'s or cumulative record cards)

## The responsibilities of teacher assistants

The specific duties of a teacher assistant are varied,

While no list would ever be complete, below are some examples of tasks that teacher assistants might perform. These have been grouped under four main headings which identify the main areas where the services of teacher assistants might be utilized:

- Instructional support
- Observational/Personal support (Medication, personal care)
- Behaviour management support
- Classroom organization/support with classroom materials





# Student Assessment and Evaluation

*Your teaching plans must include well- designed methods of student evaluation.*





# ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Properly constructed assessments, direct observation and student interviews help you to measure progress. Evaluation should be continuous and consistent and you should use a variety of evaluation techniques.

The [assessment policy from the EECD outlines the following guiding principles:](#)

- Get to know learners as they are known.
- Identify and clearly communicate with learners the learning outcomes and criteria for success.
- Plan instruction and learning experiences that will meet the identified needs and interests of all learners.
- Design a variety of assessment opportunities that will generate evidence of learning. Provide options for learner voice and choice wherever possible.
- Use evidence of learning to provide feedback during the learning and practice phase that moves learning forward, (e.g., check for understanding of what was taught; plan for next steps in instruction).
- Use the criteria for success to provide ongoing feedback to learners, explaining what the learner has under control and the next steps to go deeper in their understanding and application of concepts and skills.
- Gather evidence of learning from a variety of sources, (e.g., conversations/conferences, observations, and products).
- Track and record evidence of student learning to inform follow-up instructional and evaluative decisions.
- Use tracked and recorded evidence of learning, from a variety of sources and opportunities, along with professional judgment, to evaluate and summarize learner progress and achievement.
- Build and maintain close communication with parents/guardians, in a variety of ways, throughout the school year, regarding learner progress and achievement.

Student assessment and evaluation involves using a variety of assessment strategies including check lists, peer and self evaluation, teacher-designed tests, projects, assignments and observations, as well as standardized and commercially-developed tests for use in transition planning for students who are considering post-secondary study.

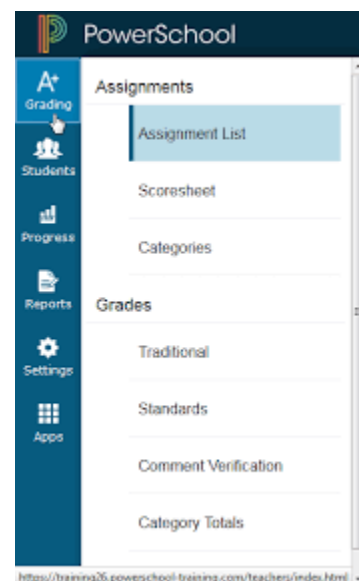


## Record Keeping

Student assessment and evaluation information is highly confidential and essential to inform your teaching practice.

- Keep a CONFIDENTIAL anecdotal file where you can note pertinent information on work habits, academic success, or behavioral challenges. Specific comments and examples are the most useful. Always include dates.
- PowerTeacher Pro is the main information system used in Nova Scotia Schools. There are video tutorials and user guides available at: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/inschool/docindex-en>.
- Accurate record keeping is a prime responsibility of a teacher. When you report to parents, you will want to relate student achievement to the program objectives.

For a beginning teacher, making judgments about student progress may seem a bit overwhelming, but with organization and a good plan for evaluation, your students will receive quality information about their progress.

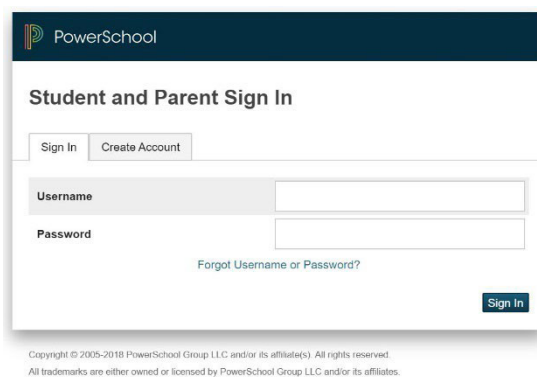


## Reporting of Evaluations

There are many ways to inform students and their parents of the child's progress in school. It is important to communicate with the students and parents long before the first report card goes home.

Methods for showing students' work alongside the learning outcomes:

- Notes sent home
- Sending home results from tests
- Telephone calls home—reporting outstanding performance as well as concerns
- Progress reports
- Parent-teacher interviews
- Student-parent-teacher meetings
- Report cards.
- [Requests for use of preferred name](#)



PowerTeacher Pro can be accessed through your GNSPES Launch Page.  
Students can access their portal through their GNSPES launch page as well.  
Parents/Guardians can access their portal through the RCE/Board website.





# Class Excursions

*Class excursions are wonderful opportunities to allow students to expand their horizons.*

*Trips allow students to see practical applications of what is experienced in the classroom. It affords enrichment to the regular program.*



While the benefits can be readily identified, a teacher must be well prepared before taking a group out of the classroom setting. For the protection of all, four general rules should be applied to all excursions:

## **Check the RCE/Board policy on travel**

All regional centres for education/school boards have specific policies on transportation of students in private vehicles.

### ***All trips need to be approved by the administration of the school***

Let them know what you are planning and get approval before sending notices home. A copy of the student permission form should also be sent to the office. In addition to keeping the site administrators informed about what you will do, the secretary will find it a useful reference if parents are calling to ask about the trip.

***Make sure that the permission form includes all pertinent information*** about what the students need to bring and what time they should be at school if it is earlier than usual. Make this information detachable so that parents can have it on the evening before and the morning of the trip. Collect all completed permission forms in advance of the day of the trip.

***Ensure that you have all important documentation with you:*** travel list with parent/guardian contact information, photo permission information. Ensure all relevant medical and other health concerns are noted. Take food if needed. Diabetic supplies, Epi pens etc.; TA support as required;

***Plan for contingencies.*** Make every effort to arrange to have a cell phone with you for emergencies

***Give the school administrative assistant a cell number where you can be reached.***

***Arrange sufficient parent support.*** Check the policy at your school for adult: child ratios. Remember that the minimum ratio may not be appropriate for some activities that require more intensive monitoring. Plan what you will do if something goes wrong and a student needs to be sent home. Are there enough volunteers to send one home with the student? How will they get home?

***Double check on any bookings:*** if you have arranged for drivers or a bus; call the day before to confirm. If taking public transit, make sure there have not been changes to the schedule. Buy bus tickets in advance and keep them in two baggies (one for going, one for coming). Put a parent volunteer in charge of looking after them and getting any transfers needed.

***If there is a fee involved, make sure you know what method of payment will be accepted.*** A company unprepared to accept cash or a personal cheque has embarrassed more than one teacher!

***Take along something to amuse the students if there is a delay.*** A novel you are reading, some brainteasers, even jokes will keep them from getting antsy.

***Take a first aid kit,*** even if you know one will be available wherever you are going. Grocery bags are crucial, especially for car or bus trips. Students with weak stomachs may need them; they are also great for garbage when receptacles are not available.

***Make reflection a part of the follow-up back at school.*** Students will remember more about the trip and you will be promoting the value of trips to the school and parent community.



***Students must be thoroughly prepared***

- have the level of skill development required
- have an understanding of the purpose and be accountable for their learning
- be aware of acceptable behavior

***Teachers must possess the required level of expertise/skill required to ensure safety of students.***

Before taking the students away from the school, it is helpful if you have had an opportunity to take them to the gym or auditorium for an assembly or if you have had experience supervising activities in the school year. Class rules may need to be modified for these outings and you may not anticipate what modifications are needed until you are already too far away from your class to make them! The following is a list of suggestions for increasing your chances of having a positive trip experience:

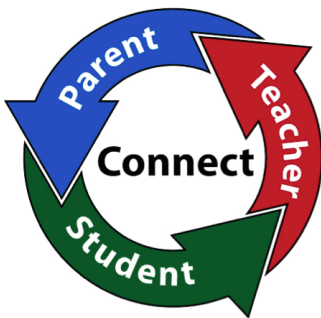
- ***Talk about what you will see and hear on the trip.*** Knowing what to expect will make students more comfortable and more accountable for the learning outcomes. Don't assume that they will make the connection between the trip and the work you are doing in the classroom. Point out the value of the excursion to the students. Give them an assignment, a purpose for going.
- ***Review the "rules of the road" ahead of time.*** If you don't want bus songs, say so. Having partners or small groups set in advance will help manage attendance. Assign one student to the front of the line and one student to the end of the line to keep the students together. No one gets on the bus and no one enters a building before the line leader who gets their cue from you. You can also assign each student a number and have them recite them as a quick way to take attendance.





NOVA SCOTIA

# Communicating with Parents



*The importance of developing strong parent-teacher partnerships is often overlooked.*

*Teachers and parents share a common interest in helping students to achieve their fullest potential.*



## Partnerships with Parents/Guardians “Grown Ups”

You can welcome parents as partners in learning by creating conditions where parents can assume roles as advisors, collaborators and supporters. In these meaningful roles, parents are not mere spectators – they are active participants in the teaching-learning process. Trust, respect and honesty are necessary conditions for parent-teacher relationships to flourish. Mutual support and open communication between the school and the home create a climate where the student is at the heart of the learning partnership.

Enlisting the assistance of parents is an important strategy to employ. Your approach will have a lot to do with the level of cooperation you will receive. Very few parents object to a teacher approaching them with an idea that might help their child if the idea shows the teacher’s commitment to the success of that child. Consider parents as part of the support for a mutually agreed upon solution to behaviour challenges.

Apart from wanting to be kept informed about their child’s progress, parents are also interested in other information about the school, such as:

- ? What are the school goals?
- ? What are your goals as the teacher?
- ? What is the child learning?
- ? How is the child being taught?
- ? What attendance and homework policies are in place?
- ? What courses and extracurricular activities are available?
- ? What is new, or being changed at the school and why?

## Meet the Teacher Night

The first formal introduction to parents will usually be in the form of some sort of “Meet the Teacher” activity. This may have different names, but usually it is a time to introduce yourself and your curriculum.

- **About Parents** – You will want to talk to colleagues to find out what parents expect from this session. You should also seek information regarding the demography of the parent population. Ask parents to identify two or three concerns before they attend the function. Treat parents as partners in the learning process.
- **About You** – As a first-year teacher, many parents will be coming to “check you out.” Be prepared to instill confidence regarding your instructional abilities. Talk about your relevant experiences (camp counsellor, club sponsor, etc.). Let your enthusiasm show!
- **All About Your Classroom** – You might consider discussing the following: rules and operating procedures, the subject(s) and goals of the curriculum, expectations for students, instructional materials.
- **Your Presentation** – You will want to be well prepared for this session. Some of the following techniques may be helpful:



- use appropriate media and handouts;
- outline what you are going to address (watch your timing to be sure you hit all relevant points)
- present a sample lesson;
- have handouts of curriculum, grading procedures, homework criteria, etc.
- **Working Together** – This is a good opportunity for you to identify how home and school can work together. Inform parents of when, where and how you can be reached and discuss how parents can best support their child’s learning out of school.
- **Cautionary Notes** – Don’t let one parent monopolize the discussion or sidetrack you; have a conference sign-up sheet available; don’t get caught in a student conference situation—this is not the intent of the session. Have key responses ready so you’re not caught off-guard: for example, “Can we set an appointment to give this the time it merits?”

Once you have opened the doors of communication with parents, you are on the road to developing a trusting relationship. There are several ongoing means of communication such as phone calls, newsletters, progress reports, notes, positive messages, classroom meetings, mini-surveys, conferences (informal and formal), email and the use of a Web page or website.

Teachers have the right to be treated with respect and to work in an environment free from harassment and abuse. If you feel you are not receiving adequate help elsewhere, your Union will advise you, and, if necessary, intercede on your behalf.





## Progress Reports—Interview Tips

### 1. *Before the Conference*

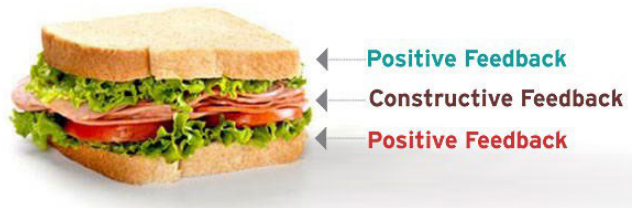
The best communication climate is a comfortable one; if you are relaxed, parents usually will relax, too. There are many communication techniques that will lead to a successful conference.

- ensure parents are aware of any major areas of difficulty before the conference
- be well prepared; collect dated samples of student work completed throughout the term to show improvement and/or next steps in learning
- before your first meeting with parents, review the academic history of the student compile appropriate material to substantiate your evaluation
- find out how your current school handles scheduling for parent interviews
- check with colleagues for helpful tips regarding parent conferences
- prepare a conference form for record keeping to keep the discussion focused and to be an aid for future conferences
- successful conferences deal with only a few issues because of time constraints; ensure you know what points you want to cover
- if the students are not included in the conference, ensure they are aware of what will be discussed
- arrange informal seating around a table with the student work on display
- ensure privacy
- have appointments posted outside the door and keep to the schedule; parents needing additional conference time should be invited to come at a later date
- have chairs and an activity outside the classroom to make the wait a little less tedious

### 2. *During the Conference*

- greet the parents at the door
- introduce yourself with a friendly voice, but keep opening comments to a minimum to allow more discussion time
- no matter how many challenges a student has, first find some positive things to report
- maintain the focus and keep the discussion on track
- be clear and concise in your comments; be an attentive listener
- keep the parents involved by encouraging them to share pertinent information with you
- with the parents' help, develop some goals for the rest of the year
- aim to stay within time limits
- if more time is needed, arrange for a follow-up meeting.

### The Feedback Sandwich



### 3. *Concluding the Conference*





- summarize the points covered and add these to your files
- highlight the conclusions and the agreed-upon actions
- if needed, set another date for an interview
- check that the parents have a clear understanding of what was discussed
- end as you began – on a positive note
- thank the parents and walk them to the door.

### 4. *Follow-up*

- if you or a parent have agreed to a specific strategy, program, etc.—it is advisable to send a written summary of what has been agreed to within a week of the conference
- keep your principal informed of concerns that have been raised
- keep written notes for future reference.

#### ***Sample***

##### Progress Report Interview Format

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>Introduction</b>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– state purpose of the conference</li><li>– share something positive about the child</li></ul>  |
|  <b>Academic Achievement</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– update on past concerns, if necessary.</li><li>– discuss academic strengths/weaknesses</li><li>– present documentation</li><li>– obtain parental input and reaction to information</li><li>– develop one academic goal in clear parent-friendly language.</li></ul> |
|  <b>Social Interaction &amp; Behaviour</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– discuss social strengths/weaknesses and behaviour</li><li>– present specific examples</li><li>– obtain parent input and reaction</li></ul>  |
|  <b>Closure</b>                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– develop a behaviour/social goal, if necessary.</li><li>– review goals</li><li>– plan for follow-up</li><li>– close on a positive note.</li></ul>  |








## Problem Solving Interview

There will be times when you will need to meet with parents or guardians to discuss ongoing problems or issues with students.

### *Sample*

#### Problem-Solving Interview Format

- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  <b>Introduction</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– state purpose or concern</li><li>– update the situation.</li></ul>  |
|  <b>Description of the Problem</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– describe the problem, present documentation</li><li>– discuss what has been done</li><li>– obtain parent input and reaction to problem.</li></ul> |
|  <b>Problem Solving</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– suggest possible solution(s)</li><li>– discuss different alternatives</li><li>– obtain parent input and suggestions.</li></ul>                    |
|  <b>Action Planning</b>            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– develop an action plan for improvement</li><li>– identify specific actions.</li></ul>   |
|  <b>Closure</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– plan for follow-up</li><li>– close on a positive note.</li></ul>  |

## Tips for Communicating Regularly With Parents

- phone calls about good things that the child has accomplished
- newsletters containing student work
- keep documents for each child noting the positive things that have happened
- think of Education Week as an opportunity to communicate with parents
- when you discuss a problem with parents, be truthful, sincere and objective—they will respect your integrity
- invite parents to the school (in consultation with administration) so that families can see their children's progress.

## Tips for Phoning a Parent re a Student Concern

- begin with a statement of concern
- describe the behaviour in specific terms
- describe the steps you have taken
- seek input from the parent
- find a solution together
- express confidence that together you can address the problem
- set a date for follow-up contact



## Substitute Teachers



# Preparing for Substitutes

*Being prepared for times you may be absent will benefit not only the substitute teacher but also your students and, ultimately, you. Keep in your desk a kit of basic information a substitute may need.*



## Being prepared... even when you are not there

There will be occasions when you will need to be absent from school. You should check with your principal as to the proper protocol for teacher absence. If the absence is planned, i.e. you will be away for a scheduled meeting or a professional development day, then the principal will know well in advance and be able to call in a substitute teacher. However, if the absence is unplanned, i.e. illness or some other unforeseen circumstance, there should be a system in place whereby you notify the school and a substitute is called for you. In this event you will need to have a contingency plan for your classes for that day. It is your responsibility to ensure that a quality education program continues in your absence. Advance planning on your part will help to maintain a consistency of routine and will, in the long run, make it easier for you upon your return.

### Substitute Information File

It is recommended that you prepare some basic information for the substitute teacher. This should be in a folder in an easily accessible place, either in your desk or in the main office. Basic information might include:

- The names of reliable students who could be of help.
- Daily and weekly timetable, indicating times.
- Seating plan(s).
- Map of the school, including key locations and fire exits.
- Supervision schedule and guidelines.
- Class list.
- Notes on procedures and routines such as taking attendance.
- Homework assignments and policy.
- Class rules, expectations and responsibilities.
- Information about students with special behaviour/health needs.
- Emergency lessons for each class that can be used by a substitute teacher who may not be specialized in your content area.
- Note on what you expect to be done upon your return. i.e. correct assignments.

See Appendix A for sample forms to assist you in putting this information together.

There is also a Classroom Form for substitutes located under the Substitutes section on the public side of the NSTU website and at the end of this document. You can fill out this form online and print it out for your substitute teacher.



A banner with a yellow background and a blue and orange geometric design on the left. The text is arranged in three horizontal sections: a blue box with white text, an orange box with white text, and a yellow box with blue text. The NSTU logo is in the bottom right corner.

**Connect with the NSTU**

**Substitute Teachers**  
please share your contact information with us  
[click here to stay connected with the NSTU](#)

 Nova Scotia Teachers Union

# Information for Substitute Teachers

## *Acknowledgements*

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union would like to thank the British Columbia Teachers Federation for permission to use material from their publication “Teachers On Call Handbook”, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario for permission to use material from their publication “Answering the Call –

a Handbook for Occasional Teachers”, and the NSTU Committee on Substitute Issues and Concerns for their feedback on the content.

The NSTU welcomes feedback from substitutes on the content and value of this section. Comments should be directed to:

## **Member Services**

Nova Scotia Teachers Union 1-800-565-6788

477-5621

fax: 902-477-3517

[substiutes@nstu.ca](mailto:substiutes@nstu.ca)



# THE SUBSTITUTE TEACHER

## The Value of the Substitute

As a substitute teacher, you are a significant part of the school team. Substitutes, like regular teachers, are responsible for far more than the management of one group of students; you are expected to become a team member. When you are with your students, you represent the entire staff of the school. You are responsible for maintaining the positive learning climate of the school, for administering the school's code of conduct, and for communicating with other educators who may be working with students in your group.

A substituting position provides a testing ground for many prospective full-time teachers. As a substitute you will be afforded the opportunity to gain a variety of experiences in a variety of settings across grade levels.

Many teachers have confirmed their decision to be a classroom teacher by experiencing substitute assignments. Others have used the role to decide which grades suit them most.

The substitute role provides an opportunity to test teaching strategies and innovative ideas. It can contribute to one's sense of satisfaction gleaned from facilitating students' learning.

## The Successful Substitute

An analysis of student comments shows that a substitute who is confident, prepared, in charge, and consistent with the established classroom routines is more readily accepted. So, as much as possible, go in prepared with knowledge about the most important routines and procedures. Most students respond positively to a substitute who is enthusiastic and sensitive to their needs. See **The Successful Substitute checklist**, later in this section, to help you ensure you cover all your bases from the beginning to the end of the day. By doing so, you greatly increase your chances of being called back again.

Don't forget to prepare a simple teacher plan before you leave. It is greatly appreciated.



*Go in prepared with knowledge about the most important routines and procedures.*



## Regular Classroom Teachers and the Substitute

Without the services of a substitute, student learning would be threatened. The school system relies on substitutes to provide consistency in the students' learning environment. Regular teachers understand the challenges of substitute teaching.

Many have served in this demanding role themselves. Teachers look upon substitutes as teaching colleagues.

Generally speaking, a substitute can expect support and a special measure of understanding from regular teachers in the school. In many schools, a teacher in a nearby classroom will assist the substitute teacher who is assigned to the school. Don't be afraid to ask questions.

Consider your colleagues special allies who regard your work as an essential contribution to student's learning.

As a substitute teacher, it is important to follow any plan provided by the classroom teacher. You should leave clear indications as to what was accomplished and mark anything which you have taught. See **Substitute Report to Teacher**, later in this section, for a sample reporting form. If a meeting is scheduled and you can attend, do so and take notes for the teacher. Remember to leave the classroom the way you found it. If you do a good job, you increase the chances of being called to sub in that school again.

## The Administration and the Substitute

Since the principal and vice-principal are the educational leaders in the school, your work as a substitute will be noticed by them. Clearly, they want your experience in the school to be a positive one. You are a special guest to the school; you bring a trained and critical eye to what is going on in the school.

You are filling in for a teacher who expects that the routines of the classroom are maintained so administration must accept a degree of responsibility for your work. Therefore, expect the principal to show special interest in your presence in the school. The principal may observe and assess you to determine your competence in the teaching role. To the extent that your work meets the standard of the regular classroom teacher and of the principal, you will establish a reputation and increase the chances of being called back.

Administrators appreciate the time and energy that substitute teachers give to their school in the performance of their duties.

Administrators are there to assist you if need be. If you feel that you need their assistance, do not hesitate to call upon them. Because they deserve to know about your substitute experience whether it be positive or negative, you should communicate with the school principal on how your day went.

Substitute teachers operate on a two-way street. You are checking out the school and the school is checking out you. Both are hoping they like what they see.



*Carry a notebook to jot down neat ideas you come across in your travels – ie, bulletin boards, art displays, organization, etc.*





## ESTABLISHING RAPPORT IN THE CLASSROOM

It is important to establish a positive rapport quickly with the students. Both students and teachers comment on how students love to misbehave when the substitute arrives. Some students may feel threatened when they see an unfamiliar teacher in charge. Therefore, it is necessary to dispel fears and to show an interest in the students as individuals.

- Meeting the students at the door is a good way to begin.
- Aim to have an activity ready when students enter – puzzles, word search, or even the page to open in their book.
- Be positive and confident.
- Clearly state your own expectations toward behaviour. Be brief. This is essential. Long discussions and explanations about behaviour will not be assimilated.
- Establish a few specific “for today” rules.
- As much as possible, follow regular classroom routines. Children will feel secure if you show that you are confident and in control.



*Introduce yourself and identify whom you are replacing. In case no lesson plans are available, have an emergency file prepared.*

### **Rapport with Staff**

As a substitute teacher, you do your best to provide a good learning experience for the class. Cooperating with your colleagues is essential in case you need their assistance. If no lesson plans are available, take this as an opportunity to incorporate your own ideas. This is where your own emergency file is invaluable.

### **Rapport with the Administration**

In busy schools, the reality is that you could teach several days without ever meeting the principal. Do not allow this to happen. Introduce yourself to the administration.

Be confident and professional. Do not be afraid to seek assistance if you need it. Do not be a critic or a whiner. Make a concise list of what you need for you and your students to have a successful day and approach the administration in a positive way. Make sure your resume is on file.

### **Rapport with the School Administrative Assistant & Custodian**

The secretary and custodian can be invaluable. They know where everything is. Don't forget to show appreciation for their efforts on your behalf.



# GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE DISCIPLINE

## Three Basics To Remember

### Be Consistent

Have the same expectations of all students for appropriate behaviour. Your students should know that you will enforce expectations consistently and apply an appropriate consequence. Your goal is to be fair, but that might mean not applying the identical approach with all students.

### Monitor Student Behaviour

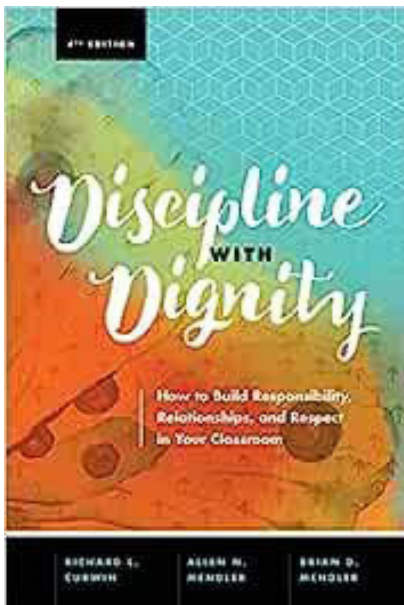
Use an “active eye.” See what is going on. Don’t become preoccupied with someone or something and ignore the rest of the class. In terms of effective teaching, one teacher on his/her feet is worth two in the seat. If you feel students are becoming disengaged, try a movement break or change the pace of the lesson to regain their interest. This will help redirect student behaviour.

### Promptly Address Inappropriate Behaviour

Effective classroom managers know that if they don’t handle misbehaviour immediately they risk a snowballing effect. To provide maximum time for learning and to reduce minor behaviour problems, you can employ strategies that deal with behaviour in the least time, with the least disruption and the least negative feeling.



*Fair is not always equal; fair is appropriate to the situation and consistent.*



*Many attention and behaviour problems occur during transition times – those times when there is an unavoidable break in the instructional day.*

*Prepare for this!*

*Explicitly teach skills for this type of interruption/transition.*



## Strategies

### Proximity

Continuing your lesson while you move about the room, pausing near “trouble spots,” can let the students know that even though they aren’t near the teacher’s desk, they are still expected to demonstrate appropriate behaviour. Getting “boxed in” in one area of the room encourages misbehaviour in the far corners of the room.

### Pausing

Continuous teacher talk may give students a noise screen for their own conversations. An occasional pause—just a few seconds of silence—brings an off-task student back.

### Active Participation

Sometimes having the student become involved in an activity can eliminate the undesired behaviour. Asking for a show of hands, having students perform a physical activity, or having each student write a quick answer to a question can make all students accountable for an immediate response.

Add some more ideas below:

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## READY FOR THE CALL

### Substitute Survival Kit

As a substitute, you will likely be called upon to fill in for a teacher on very short notice. To help you survive and thrive, you should have a survival kit made up of:

1. Introductory Activities
2. Emergency Lessons
3. Sponge Activities
4. Blank Class List form

### Introductory Activities

Start the instructional day as soon as the announcements and opening exercises are completed. Introductory activities are efficient vehicles for helping you to get to know the students and to build a connection with them in a timely fashion.

### Emergency Lessons

If you are called to an assignment at the last minute, the regular teacher may not have had a chance to leave proper instructions. When this happens, you need a strategy that buys you time to do your planning. The emergency lesson is one answer. The emergency lesson is an activity suited to a wide range of abilities that captivates attention and sustains interest for some time. These lessons might consist of a selection of action songs, art activities, fun with words and numbers, and so forth. As a last resort, there is nothing as appealing as a good story whether read or that can be found on an approved website.

### Sponge Activities

Experienced teachers know that most problems with student attention and behaviour occur during transitions when there is an unavoidable break in the continuity of the instructional day. Sometimes an activity takes less time than planned. To avoid opportunities for classroom disruption and confusion, it is important to be prepared when you find your students with time on their hands. Having “Sponge” activities ready to go will help to “soak up” the extra time while giving students educationally, sound experiences.



## GETTING OFF TO A GOOD START

When you head out to your assignment, be sure to allow yourself ample time to arrive at the school. Before you begin the instructional day there are some things you need to consider. Check to see if an information kit has been provided by the teacher to assist you in becoming familiar with school routines as quickly as possible. If not, the checklist – Prior to Beginning the Instructional Day (found later in this section), is designed to help you in this regard. The information gathered will contribute to the smooth operation of the learning environment and may reduce the opportunities for disruption.

If you are in a school for just one day, you will not be able to get all of this information. Just get the essentials. However, keep the info sheet on file in the event that you are called back. Then, you won't have to start from scratch.

To increase your chances of being called back, ask yourself:



- ✓ Did I teach what was outlined?
- ✓ Have routines been followed?
- ✓ Is there a record of what was taught? What was substituted?
- ✓ Are there anecdotal notes covering the key events of the substitute's day?
- ✓ Has the marking been done?
- ✓ Did I leave the room in the same condition as when I entered it?

## TECHNOLOGY

Model appropriate use of technology safely and efficiently.

- Consult the regional centre for education/school board website to view the computer policy in the school and what the proper procedures are when using computers with students.
- If you are unsure if a site is acceptable, bring it to your principal or to another teacher to ask for insight.
- Always make sure to document for the classroom teacher what websites you used and why you used them to ensure that the teacher is aware of the content;
- Be sure to circulate the room and monitor the students as they are on the computer to ensure they are staying on task and doing what they are supposed to be doing.
- Check with the principal or the person in charge of technology at the school to see if the school has subscribed to any websites that will be useful to you.
- If you are assigning something that has to be printed ensure that the printers work or that you have some means of saving the students' work to be printed at a later date.
- Remember to use caution while using school technology and that everything done on computers is monitored so be respectful of the school rules in regards to what sites teachers can visit when students are not present.



# THE SUCCESSFUL SUBSTITUTE CHECKLIST

## Before the instructional day begins:

- arrive as early as possible (at least 20 minutes before classes begin)
  - o Is there a teacher who can provide assistance during the day?
  - o Are there special needs students in the classroom?
  - o Where are the class list, the seating plan and the register?
  - o Where are the lesson plans and timetable?
  - o Are there special events that might alter your timetable (e.g.: an assembly or fundraising activity)?
  - o Will you be responsible for extra duties or supervision?
  - o Where are the staff room, the nurse's room, the lunch room, the school gymnasium, the office, the photocopy room, the doors to the playground, and staff and students' washrooms?
  - o What are the fire drill/evacuation procedures and fire regulations?
  - o Where and how can you access technology
  - o What are the procedures for collection of money and permission forms?
  - o Will there be other personnel with whom you may be interacting during the day? (teacher aides, parent volunteers, language teachers, special education resource teacher.)
  - o Staff room: use of mugs, established seating arrangements?
- aim to have an activity ready when students enter, i.e., a puzzle or word search –or the page to open in their book
- check teachers mail for any papers, notices, etc. that need to go home with students, check again before the end of the day
- bring extra pencils, two erasers and two glue sticks – put your name on each!
- bring post it note



*When students borrow an item, ask for an item for “collateral” to be returned when the borrowed item is returned. This will really cut down on the number of things that “go missing” on you.*

## At the beginning of the day,

- establish behavioural expectations with the students.
- begin your instructional day immediately after opening exercises.
- be firm, but positive as you tell the students what to do.
- follow the established classroom routines as much as possible.
- practice the attention signal.
- seek out willing students to assist you with your understanding of routines.
- get to know as many of the students by name as quickly as possible.



- follow the teacher's plans as closely as possible.
- don't attempt to teach a lesson about which you are not certain. Most teachers would rather return to a lesson untaught than a lesson that was poorly taught.
- have your own emergency file to fill in "where necessary".
- keep it moving!
- try to have at least one positive interaction with each child each day.
- celebrate the good things that are happening: focus on the positive.

### **At the end of the day,**

- leave the room in the same condition in which you found it.
- do an end-of-the-day report for the teacher.
- prepare a simple lesson that the teacher may be able to use first thing the next day.
- thank staff and students who assisted you during the day.
- take with you all your teaching resources and personal effects.
- check in at the office before you leave; leave your name and phone number – consider creating a "business card" for this purpose.
- maintain confidentiality and a professional attitude about the school.
- complete "daily" correcting.
- remain in school at least 20 minutes after classes end.



# SUBSTITUTE REPORT TO TEACHER

Substitute's name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

In for \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Work completed:

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Observations:

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Additional Comments:

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_







# Appendix A

## Substitute Information



## **SUBSTITUTE INFORMATION BINDER SHOULD CONTAIN THE FOLLOWING:**

- Map of the school
- Emergency evacuation procedures
- Scheduling information (including supervision times and locations)
- Class list(s)-including students' **preferred names with their permission**
- Seating plan(s) (where applicable)
- Information on individual students' needs and support plans
- Classroom routines
- Emergency Lessons/activities



# SPECIFICS TO CONSIDER:

## IMPORTANT CLASSROOM INFORMATION

- Teacher(s) who will assist you:
- Student(s) who will assist you:
- Classroom expectations / discipline procedures:
- Students with health/learning needs, and how to support them
- Pets and plants:
- Additional notes

## CLASSROOM ROUTINES/EXPECTATIONS (INVOLVE THE STUDENTS and PRACTICE!)

- Entering the classroom
- Signal for getting student attention
- Attendance taking
- Collecting completed assignments
- Correspondence from home
- Late arrivals
- Being prepared
- Distributing books, supplies
- Leaving their seat
- Leaving the room
- Library/Classroom resources
- Recess / lunch
- Activity option for when assignments have been completed
- Dismissal

Additional notes:

Additional useful information:





# Appendix B

## Member Assistance Program



# **MEMBER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (MAP)**

## **Counselling Services**

Counselling Services works to strengthen and support the quality of personal and professional life for NSTU members, their partners and dependents throughout all school districts.

Counselling Services provides short-term assistance. Those requiring longer-term intervention are, after an initial assessment, assisted by referral to an appropriate community-based professional.

Workshops for school staffs are offered, as requested, on issues such as wellness and managing workplace stress and pre-retirement.

Crisis intervention for staff members to address trauma and grief situations is available on request.

All counselling requires the consent and participation of the client regardless of the referring circumstances.

All information given to Counselling Services will be confidential.

Any release of information requires the signed consent of all parties involved who are over the age of 12. Exceptions to this apply if subpoenaed by the court or required under legislation.

Therapists with Counselling Services are highly qualified, registered with their professional organizations and recognized for their excellence as clinical therapists and workshops leaders.

Counselling sessions are made by appointment only. Appointments are available at a mutually acceptable time and place throughout all regions of the province. To arrange an appointment, please call Member Assistance Program (MAP) between 8:00 am and 4:00 p.m. at the NSTU Central Office, 1-902-477-5621, or 1-800-565-6788 (toll free) or email [nurse@nstu.ca](mailto:nurse@nstu.ca). NSTU provides these services to members at no charge.



## **Early Intervention Program (EIP)**

The Early Intervention Program (EIP) is a program for all NSTU members who are working or on paid sick leave and are experiencing illness or injury. The intent of the program is to facilitate early return to health and work or early application to disability benefits.

Participation in the program is voluntary and confidentiality is assured. NSTU members are encouraged to contact the Member Assistance Program (MAP) directly if they feel assistance is required or if they are at risk of disability.

Intervention may include assistance with coordinating health services, ergonomic assessments or facilitation of a return-to-work plan. In the event a member is unable to return to work, he or she will be guided through the process of early application to disability benefits. Intervention services are provided by registered occupational therapists.

For information, please contact MAP at 902-477-5621; toll free 1-800-565-6788; fax 902-477-3517, email [nurse@nstu.ca](mailto:nurse@nstu.ca); website: [www.nstu.ca](http://www.nstu.ca), under “Member Services” tab, choose Other Services, and EIP (Early Intervention Program).



## **Manulife Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)**

In addition to NSTU Counselling Services, Manulife EFAP is an Employee and Family Assistance Program available to all permanent, probationary or term contract teachers. Counselling Services can be provided in-person, by phone or through a secure online service that can deal with such things as stress, psychological disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, anger management and conflict resolution. There are also plan smart and career smart services giving a member support in such things as childcare, eldercare, legal, financial, nutritional support and 12 weeks to wellness. It is available 24 hours/7 days a week, 365 days a year for both counselling services and plan smart and career smart services. Members also can access an online resource of healthcare related material through Health eLinks. It allows you to take part in an interactive health risk assessment and comprehensive library of medical information. The toll-free number is 1-877-955-NSTU (6788) or in French 1-800-613-1142. Online counselling is available at <https://homeweb.ca> (use contract #39146).

## **CAREpath – The Cancer Assistance Program**

The CAREpath program is a service provided by the Insurance Trustees. If an active or retired member, their spouse, or dependent children suspect having cancer, are diagnosed with cancer, or are living with cancer, CAREpath is able to provide support. CAREpath provides a cancer nurse, backed by an oncologist specializing in the specific cancer. Support is provided through scheduled telephone discussions to help ensure the best treatment possible. CAREpath is intended to support, not replace, health services provided by doctors. The toll-free number is 1-866-883-5956. More information can be found at [www.carepath.ca](http://www.carepath.ca).

## **CAREpath – Seniors’ Care Assistance Program**

Effective January 1, 2016, the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees introduced a new program funded by the NSTU Group Insurance Trust Fund for both active and retired NSTU members and their families.

The Seniors’ Care Assistance Program is the only service in Canada that connects members, immediate family, and parents to a Registered Nurse who specializes in senior care assistance. The program helps members understand their senior care choices and ensure they get the right care every time. The toll free number is 1-844-453-NSTU (6788).

## **CAREpath – HealthCareAssist Program**

Effective March 1, 2018, the NSTU Group Insurance Trustees introduced the HealthCareAssist Program which is a comprehensive navigation service that provides NSTU members, spouses and dependent children with answers, guidance and support before, during and after treatment, in the event of an illness or health crisis.

HealthCareAssist provides individual case management of all types of medical conditions. A Nurse Case Manager provides a single point of contact, creates continuity of care and ensures patients receive the right treatment, at the right time, in the right place.

HealthCareAssist combines CAREpath’s team of highly trained and caring nurses with Cleveland Clinic Canada’s global network of physicians and specialists. The toll-free number is 1-844-453-NSTU (6788).





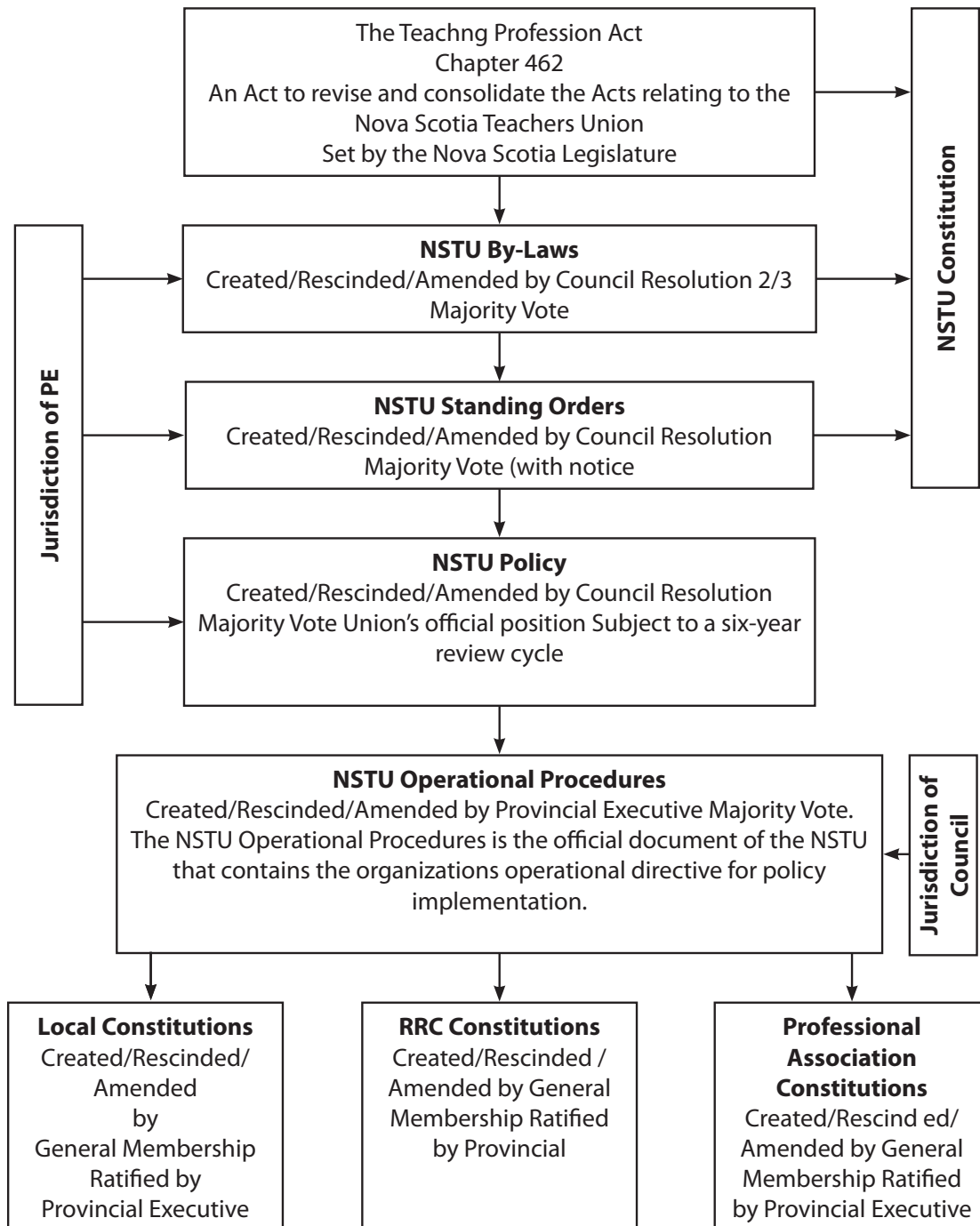
# Appendix C

## Constitutional Framework of the NSTU





## CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE NSTU



### NSTU Executive Staff

The NSTU employs 10 executive staff and one executive director who direct and co-ordinate the activities and programs of the NSTU under the supervision of the Provincial Executive.



### **C. Member and Administration**

- I. The Member should maintain a reasonable and professional level of support to internal administration of the school/educational site and regional office.

### **D. Member and Professional Organization**

- I. The Member who in their professional capacity is a Member of a committee, board, or authority dealing with matters affecting the educational program of Nova Scotia as a whole should be elected, appointed, or approved by the Nova Scotia Teachers Union.
- II. The Member, or group of Members, should not take any individual action in matters which should be dealt with by their Local, Regional Representative Council, or by the NSTU.
- III. The Local or Regional Representative Council should not take any individual action in matters where the assistance of the NSTU has been sought, or in matters requiring the authorization of the NSTU.

### **E. Member and Profession**

- I. The Member's conduct should advance and promote the teaching profession and the cause of education in the province.
- II. The Member should maintain their professional learning which will keep them abreast of the trends in education.
- III. The Member should engage in no gainful employment, outside of the contract, where the employment affects adversely their professional status, or impairs their standing with pupils, colleagues, and the community.

### **F. Member and Community**

- I. The Member should so conduct themselves in their private life that no dishonour may befall them or through them to the profession.



# New Teacher

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Nova Scotia Teachers Union

