



# Substitute Binder Checklist

## Essentials for Your Sub Binder, Folder, or Tub

A well-planned sub binder is like a secret weapon for classroom success when you're away! It's your way of saying, "Don't worry—I've got you covered!" to any brave soul stepping into your teaching shoes. With schedules, routines, lesson plans, and helpful student info all in one place, your sub can hit the ground running without playing detective. Plus, your students get the structure and consistency they need to keep learning (and behaving!) even when you're not there. Think of it as your classroom's ultimate survival guide—complete with all the magic spells to keep the day running smoothly!



# Essential Information

## Welcome note to the substitute

A warm welcome letter in your substitute teacher binder is like a friendly handshake to kick off the day! It sets the vibe, eases any jitters, and gives your sub the confidence to rock the classroom. Here's a quick look at what you can pop in there:

- Welcome: A friendly introduction expressing appreciation for taking over the class.
- Class Summary: A concise overview of the class, detailing the grade level, subject focus, and insights into the students' personalities or dynamics.
- Guidance: Useful tips for effectively managing the class and ensuring a seamless day.

## Contact Information

- Your name and contact info (optional)
- School address, phone number, and main office extension
- Emergency Contact(s)
- Who to contact for what (another teacher, office, etc.)

Here's a sample message you could include in this section to assist the sub: *If you have any inquiries or require help during the day, please feel free to reach out! For urgent support, our main office staff is always ready to assist you.*

# Essential Information (*continued*)

## Classroom Information

Provide a brief overview of the class, including grade level, subject focus, and number of students. Mention any key daily routines or transitions, as well as effective strategies for managing the class (e.g., positive reinforcement or clear communication). Highlight anything unique about the classroom environment that substitutes should know.

- Room Number
- Seating Chart
- Classroom Rules
- Where materials are located
- Student movement procedures (bathroom, etc.)
- Emergency procedures: Instructions for fire drills, lockdowns, tornado drills, or any other emergencies.
- School Map

**You've got options!** Keep parts of the classroom overview short and sweet in this section, or break them out into their own spotlight sections in the sub binder—it's totally up to you! This gives you the freedom to dish out just the right amount of detail to ensure the day runs like clockwork.

# Essential Information (*continued*)

## Daily Schedule

Provide a detailed class schedule in the sub binder, clearly outlining times, activities, and any variations, like assemblies or modified days. Use a simple format, such as a table or chart, to ensure the substitute can easily follow the plan and maintain consistency for students throughout the day.

- Daily schedule for each class
- Bell Schedule
- Lunch/Recess Schedule
- Special schedules

**Block scheduling made easy!** When whipping up a sub binder, add detailed schedules for each class—especially if they shake things up with variations. A simple, clear table or chart is a lifesaver for showing times, activities, and curveballs like assemblies or shortened days. This way, the substitute teacher can roll through the day effortlessly, keeping students on track and happy.



# Lesson Plans & Activities

## Detailed Lesson Plans

- Objectives, activities, materials, differentiation
- Plans for multiple days
- Lesson plans for the day (organized by subject/time)

Help your sub shine by leaving rock-solid lesson plans! Clear instructions keep the classroom humming and ensure students stay on track—even if the sub doesn't know their Minecraft from their TikTok. A little prep goes a long way to make their day a success!

## Emergency/Extra Activities

- Worksheets, reading, games, etc.
- backup activities in case extra time is available.
- Backup/emergency sub plans

Keep your sub one step ahead with extra work and emergency plans! Whether it's for fast-finishers or those "uh-oh" moments, having a backup plan ensures the day runs smoother than a freshly sharpened pencil.

## Technology Instructions

- Logins, instructions, troubleshooting
- Technology instructions (projector, smart board, logins)
- List of preferred websites/apps and login info (if needed)
- How to access attendance systems or submit lunch counts.

Don't leave your sub guessing when it comes to tech! Include step-by-step instructions for logging in, using devices, and navigating classroom platforms. Toss in a few quick fixes for when the projector decides it's having "a moment," or the smart board acts less than smart. A tech-savvy sub is a happy sub!

# Student Information

## Differentiation notes

- IEP/504 information
- Notes on any students with special needs/IEPs/504s (as appropriate)
- Accommodations

**Confidentiality is key!** When managing IEP or 504 plans, always keep things private and check in with school admin before sharing any details. These documents are packed with sensitive info, and giving out info without the green light could break privacy laws or school rules. Make sure substitutes and staff get just the info they need to support the student while keeping their rights and privacy fully protected.

## Medical Information

- List of allergies/conditions
- Class list with notes (allergies, medical needs, behavior support, etc.)
- Nurse's office location and contact details.

**Keep it confidential!** Always touch base with school administration before sharing info about student allergies or medical conditions. These details are super sensitive and protected, so spilling them without proper approval could break privacy rules and school policies. Make sure substitutes and staff get just the essentials to keep students safe, all while respecting their privacy.

# Student Information (continued)

## Behavior Plans

- Behavior management plan and class rules
- Rewards/incentives systems (if any)
- Tips for handling common challenges with students.
- School-wide behavior plan or expectations (PBIS info, etc.)

Set your sub up for success by sharing your students' behavior plans—it's like giving them a classroom GPS! If you want to go the extra mile, create a fun, sub-only behavior reward system to keep things running smoothly. Think stickers, extra free time, or a chance to be the reigning "Sub Superstar"!

## Student Helpers

- Student helpers or reliable students list
- List of student helpers or leadership roles.

Leave your sub a "Dream Team" list of helpful or responsible students—they're like the Avengers of the classroom! Suggest they assist with tasks like passing out materials, explaining routines, or leading the line to lunch. However, caution the sub not to rely on them for discipline or sharing class secrets (because let's face it, kids love a little gossip). A well-prepped Dream Team can keep the day on track and save the sub a lot of guesswork!

# Procedures & Routines

## Attendance

Roll call made simple: Remind the sub to stick to the roster, keep it quick, and save the nicknames for later. And maybe double-check for any students trying their best 'stealth mode.

- Attendance procedures

## Dismissal

End the day like a pro by sharing dismissal instructions with your sub! Whether it's lining up by bus numbers or superhero names, keep things smooth and stress-free—no chaos, just happy send-offs

- Dismissal procedures (bus numbers, walkers, car riders, etc.)

## Communication

Keep the lines of communication open by leaving a quick guide on how your sub can reach you or the office. Whether it's for questions or "the copier is plotting against me" moments, they'll appreciate knowing who to call!

## Grading/Work Collection

Grading and paper collection? No problem! Just leave instructions and let the sub know whether to park the papers on your desk, in a folder, or the trusty 'Turned In' tray—and be sure to specify if they should grade the papers or simply collect them for you.

## Equipment Use

Give your sub the 411 on classroom equipment—like where the projector hides its power button or how to coax the copier into cooperation. Clear instructions can save the day (and their sanity) when tech decides to throw a tantrum!



# End-of-Day Items

- Sub feedback form (space for notes on behavior, lessons, anything unusual)
- Thank-you note or space for a personal message
- Checklist for what to leave behind (completed work, notes, etc.)
- Instructions for cleanup, dismissal, and how to leave a note for the teacher.

Wrap up the day like a pro by leaving end-of-day instructions for your sub! Whether it's tidying up, organizing student work, or prepping for tomorrow, clear steps keep the classroom in top shape. Don't forget dismissal details—because herding kids at the end of the day can feel like wrangling excited puppies. To make things even smoother, include a sub feedback form so they can share insights and help refine your future plans. A smooth finish means your sub can leave feeling like a classroom hero!

# Extra Resources

Be the superhero your sub needs by leaving extra resources in the binder! Think emergency worksheets, brain breaks, or a “just in case” activity stash—because you never know when a lesson might wrap up quicker than expected. These extras can save the day and keep students busy (and out of trouble). Plus, your sub will thank you for being so prepared—gold stars all around!

- Early finisher activities or folders
- Brain breaks or time-fillers
- Class read-aloud books
- Extra copies of worksheets
- Hall passes
- Positive student notes

## Optional-- Thank You to the Sub

Leaving a thank-you note or treat for your sub isn't just sweet—it's like giving them a little gold star for being a classroom superhero! It's a small gesture with big impact, showing them they're appreciated for keeping things running smoothly.

Here are some small treat ideas to brighten your sub's day:

- A coffee gift card (because caffeine is a teacher's best friend).
- A pack of mints or gum for a refreshing pick-me-up.
- A cute notepad or pen to add a little flair to their desk.
- A small bag of chocolates or trail mix for a quick snack boost.
- A thank-you note with a fun sticker or magnet—they'll love the thoughtful touch!

Small gestures go a long way in saying, “You’ve got this!”

While leaving a thank-you note or treat for the sub is a thoughtful gesture, you are under no obligation to do so—it's entirely up to you!

You've made it to the end of the checklist—gold star for you! With these tips and tricks, your sub binder is now a powerhouse of organization and classroom magic. Remember, the more you prep, the smoother your sub's day will go (and the more likely they'll want to sub for you again!). Now go forth, conquer your to-do list, and give yourself a pat on the back for being the superhero teacher you are!

Ready for more classroom inspiration? Visit my blog or TpT store for additional tips, creative resources, and tools to make teaching a breeze! If you have any questions or feedback, I'd love to hear from you—don't hesitate to reach out! Together, let's keep the magic alive in your classroom!

