

## **Survival Tactics – the first INSET day**

*Taken from “How to Survive Your First Year in Teaching”, written by Sue Cowley*

Here are some ideas and tips to help get you through the day with the minimum of stress and the maximum of enjoyment:

### **Don’t dress too smartly**

### **Be prepared for meetings**

### **Use preparation time wisely**

If you are allocated preparation time, this gives you the perfect opportunity to get to know other members of your department or teachers working in the classrooms close to your own.

Take care with first impressions; even if you are the most confident individual in the world, it is worth keeping quiet at this stage to avoid making the wrong impression.

### **Start to collect resources**

An INSET day is the perfect time to collect the various papers and resources you will need during your first few weeks; these include:

- a ‘teacher’s planner’
- the finalised copy of your timetable
- class lists
- details of any children in your classes with special educational needs
- copies of schemes of work or syllabuses
- copies of whole-school policies
- resources for reward and sanction systems
- sets of books you will be teaching from
- materials for artwork and displays
- exercise books and paper
- stationery

### **Don’t get organised too soon**

It is very tempting to start organising things immediately – sticking your timetable and class lists into your planner, writing out your first week’s lessons etc.

It is best to avoid this temptation; the first week of school never runs quite according to this timetable – extra assemblies, registration or tutor time, changes to class lists etc.

Keep all your important papers in a folder to deal with at a later stage.

### **Personalise your room**

Most teachers will get a room of their own – spend some time stamping your personality on your room before the students arrive; this helps give the impression that it is your territory, and that you are well prepared and organised.

### **Get your bearings**

One of the biggest difficulties you will face at first is finding your way around, especially in a large secondary.

Aim to spend some time walking around the school; make sure you know the location of:

- the school office
- the student reception
- the Head’s office
- the deputy Head’s office
- the offices of senior staff – Assistant Headteachers, Heads of Year etc.
- photocopiers
- the assembly hall
- the canteen/dining hall
- the staffroom
- toilets – both student and staff