




# in case of emergency



When it all gets too much, don't make a dash for the nearest exit. Take a deep breath and remember Kevin Harcombe's advice. It could get you out of a tight spot...

## 1 When you don't see eye to eye with your induction tutor...

Your induction tutor makes Severus Snape look affable. He tells you "getting behaviour right is paramount," and adds, "Don't smile at them till Christmas!" Do you:

- a) Bark at your class to "Breathe in!" and warn them not to breathe out again without your express permission?
- b) Weep privately, thinking you'll never smile again with such an induction tutor?
- c) Thank him for his advice, tell him you'll certainly bear it in mind and smile at your children anyway. They'll love you for it. Behaviour management is about what works for you within the parameters of the school's policy. Positive reinforcement of acceptable behaviour is always best. Children will learn the nuances of your facial expressions – the first line of behaviour

policy – smile indicates approval and encouragement, neutral expression indicates you are less well disposed towards their behaviour, a frown means they better stop quick! And that's all before you've said a word, issued smiley faces, house points, stickers and the dozens of other tools you will have in your good behaviour repertoire.

## 2 Everyone can control your class except you

You value independence in learners. Your new class are so independent they ignore you entirely and spend the lesson chatting inconsequentially, having ruler sword fights and generally making your life hell (and your chances of surviving induction nil). The experienced teacher who releases you for your 10% NQT time tells you breezily, "What a lovely bunch! They were eating out of my hand! They're a joy to teach!" Do you:

- a) Say, "I know, aren't they angels?!" whilst privately cursing her?
- b) Weep into your Career Entry Profile?
- c) Find the teacher in a quiet moment and confide about the difficulties you are having? Ask if it would be possible on your next release time to watch, learn and make notes. Your induction tutor is your first point of contact but should never be your only one. In every school there is a wealth of experience to be tapped into and it is up to you to do it.

### Out of the mouths of babes...

I well recall the innocent remark from one child, "I'll be in your class this year!" - which made the NQT glow - "but I really wanted Miss Murray," which made the NQT deflate. You can't be their previous teacher (apparently an amalgam of Mother Teresa, Victoria Wood and Carol Vorderman) but you can be yourself and be assured they'll adore you just as much by the time they leave you next July.

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## Help! My induction tutor is an alien!

...or unhelpful, too busy to help, incompetent or sexually harassing you – all problems I've come across. Most ITs will be experienced and skilled, a tremendous support to you and may become a lifelong friend; but what do you do if they are not? You can ride it out: accept that the IT is not a great deal of use to you and gain support from alternative members of staff with whom you are more in tune. You can complain: direct to the Head – preferably with support from another colleague – or even using your professional association rep. (Always, always, always join a professional association. Yes, I know it costs at a time when your salary is meagre, but it's a great insurance policy.)

Sexual harassment or any other form of bullying or intimidation is absolutely unacceptable and you need to keep a log of any such events and again bring them to the attention of the Head or a trusted colleague.

## 3 The classroom assistant from hell

Your classroom assistant, Ms C de Vil, gives the distinct impression that she is in charge. She has 20 years experience "in this very class!" whilst you are a callow youth who should be grateful to sit adoringly at her well shod feet and learn. She has taken to rearranging the tables and chairs, despite you having set them up before leaving for home yesterday. Do you:

- a) Move all the furniture back, nail it to the floor and watch secretly as she ruptures herself at the witching hour?
- b) Weep into your cardigan as she appears to have moved the box of tissues?

c) Speak to her about the importance of working together and good communication. You're sure she moved the furniture for a very good reason but neglected to divulge this to you, which is rather unprofessional for someone with such experience. After all, though you value her enormous contribution, you are the teacher and you are the one chiefly accountable for the progress of these children. Explain that you value the enormous experience your CA has and how that will be incredibly helpful to you: value her explicitly and often. Say that there will need to be regular, if brief, meetings where ideas can be shared and discussed before you make the final decision. Set up a notebook you can both write in and read to ensure that all major actions are recorded and known to the other. If this doesn't work go to your IT or the Head. Or show your CA this article!

## Oops! My class has found my Facebook page!

Oh dear. In these days of rampant social networking you need to take great care what personal information you make public. It may well have been a wild night out and great fun, but do you really want Gavin and Ryan from your class selling copies of the photos at break time? Best to alter your privacy settings before term starts. If photos of you in a local club, naked with only a cocktail umbrella preserving your modesty, do start circulating, let your Head know and make sure the children responsible know that it is unacceptable to be touting such stuff round. Never, ever accept a friend request from a pupil and never contact them, however innocently or well meaning, by text or instant messaging such as MSN.

## How did you score?

### MOSTLY A

You are a tough cookie – maybe too tough. Try to be more of a chewy biscuit.

### MOSTLY B

See your doctor about the overactive tear ducts.

### MOSTLY C

Like Mary Poppins you are practically perfect in every way and destined for a successful NQT year.

