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Legal Responsibilities

Use the following list as a basic guide. Legal responsibilities may vary for specific states or school districts. This list has been included to make substitute teachers aware of potential dangers and responsibilities, and it should not be construed as legal advice.

Theory of Common Law—Court rulings state that schools have a special relationship with students and have a legal duty to protect them from foreseeable harm. They've ruled that schools be held liable for injuries to students if all three of the following elements are present:

- a duty of reasonable care is lacking
- a breach of duty that is the proximate cause of the damage
- actual damage to the plaintiff.

Loco Parentis—This states that schools are expected to act in the place of parents while the student is in school.

Due Process—Courts have held that education is a property right. Student property rights may not be abridged without observing students' legal due-process rights. The guarantee of a fair and impartial hearing must be afforded all students.

Respondeat Superior ("Let the Master Pay")—The school districts are held responsible for the actions of their employees when that person is carrying out the duties of his or her job. If an employee isn't acting within the scope of his or her job, then that individual is solely responsible for their actions, not the school district.

Theory of Reasonableness—Courts will look to see if school personnel acted in a reasonable and careful manner under the circumstances if a student is injured.

Degree of Foreseeable Harm—Courts will try to learn if the injury to a student could have been anticipated and prevented. To what extent could the school have known that something might happen under those circumstances?

Food Allergies—Be very careful when using candy or other edible treats as rewards. Food allergies—especially to peanuts, which can be found in trace amounts in many foods that do not appear to contain peanuts—can be very dangerous. It is best to avoid giving food to students.

Injuries to Students—If the child is injured and you aren't sure whether or not to move him, then don't. Call the school office immediately for help and let them make the decision. Attend to the injured student, and send another student for help.

If you walk into a classroom and find that the exits are blocked by desks, it is your responsibility to move them and create a safe environment for children.

Last-Minute Math Lessons *(cont.)*

❖ Relay Math

1. Students are numbered off into groups of three.
2. Each group gets a handout sheet with 20 various math problems.
3. Person "A" has 1½ minutes to independently work on as many problems as he or she can. Next, person "B" does the same thing. Finally, Person "C" works for the same amount of time. Each member may choose to do a new problem or redo one that is already completed.
4. Team members who aren't working must not give any help.
5. Next, the team members will each have one minute to work uninterrupted.
6. Finally, each member gets 30 seconds to finish or correct anything they choose.
7. The team with the most correct answers wins.

❖ Battleship

1. Give all students a piece of graph paper.
2. Students pair up and draw identical (6 x 6) grids as their partner.
3. Each student should label the squares of the grid with numbers going down the side and letters going across the top. (See the sample grid below.)
3. Each person in the pair colors in 10 squares on their grid.
4. Without looking, they take turns trying to find the squares on their opponent's grid.
5. The first person to find all their opponent's squares is the winner.

Sample Battleship Grid

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						

❖ Multiplication War

1. Children use only the numbered cards in a deck of cards.
2. They turn over cards as they would if they were playing a game of war.
3. They must multiply the numbers on the two cards.
4. The player with the first correct answer gets both cards.
5. Play until one person has all the cards.
6. You may want to assign a number value to aces and face cards (i.e., kings, queens, and jacks) if you wish to use them.