

Stakeholders in the induction process

Buddy teacher

The concept of a 'buddy' teacher as identified here has been adapted from Education Victoria (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/profdev/Pages/inductionteachers.aspx>).

Schools may decide to enlist the support of a buddy for their beginning teachers. This role does not require removing the buddy teacher from classroom duties and does not require any specific training.

This role is different from that of the mentor/coach.

Unlike more formal roles the requirements of the buddy teacher are practical in nature. The buddy teacher promotes personal and professional well-being and helps to transmit a positive perspective on school culture and teaching. The focus of the buddy teacher's role is largely friendship and personal support rather than professional practice.

Beginning teachers need empathy and perspective along with practical advice on how to reduce stress at what can be a challenging time. It is essential that negative or dismissive attitudes are not passed on.

As the buddy teacher's role is to act as the go-to person for the myriad of questions that teachers new to the school have, their role tends to be more intensive early in the beginning teacher's time in the school.

The buddy may also act as a kind of 'conciierge' directing beginning teachers to the most appropriate induction team member to assist with particular issues, concerns or problems.

The vital qualities for a buddy teacher are to:

- be available and willing to share their knowledge and expertise
- be encouraging and optimistic
- be able to communicate and demonstrate good relationships with and care for students
- be passionate about improving student outcomes
- show a commitment to lifelong learning
- demonstrate a sound understanding of the school's values and goals.

More specific areas for buddy support could include providing information and support about:

- who's who within the school staff and where they are located
- staffroom procedures - pigeon holes, tea/coffee, rosters
- keys to rooms, first aid, mail, telephone procedures
- class lists, roll marking
- computer network; internet; intranet access
- library procedures
- canteen arrangements

- equipment location, storage and borrowing arrangements
- daily school organisation, timetables, meeting schedules, playground duty
- student behaviour management processes
- pay related issues
- emergency evacuation procedures.