

Stakeholders in the induction process

Colleagues

It is important not to overlook the importance of colleagues across the school when it comes to school-based induction processes. Recent research emphasises the impact of professional learning communities where teachers learn from each other and build respect for one and other. When beginning teachers are included as an integral part of such communities and work alongside more experienced colleagues to learn and solve problems, their competence and confidence are greatly enhanced.

Each school and community is unique. Colleagues within the school setting are a great source of knowledge and expertise and will be able assist beginning teachers to refine teaching practices and better understand the school context.

Support from colleagues could include the following.

Personal support

- *Realistic solutions:* Support from colleagues to cope with practical problems helps beginning teachers to deal with everyday issues.
- *A safe environment:* Colleagues can provide a safety-net where problems and feelings can be discussed without the risk that the beginning teacher's professional competence is being judged.
- *Workload:* For beginning teachers all their lessons are new and need careful preparation. Together with a lack of experience this can create a very heavy workload which can lead to feelings of incompetence. Beginning teachers can be supported through collaborative planning and or team-teaching.
- *Connections with other teachers:* Contact, for example, with other beginning teachers can be helpful, as it can show that the problems that the new teacher faces are not unique.

Social support

- *School culture:* Colleagues can play a key role in introducing beginning teachers to the school organisation and the school culture with its written and unwritten values and norms.
- *Collaborative work:* Forms of co-teaching where two or more teachers have responsibility for certain classes or lessons, and involvement in teams and group projects, can help beginning teachers to become part of the school community.

Professional support

- *Learning about teaching:* Exchange of practical knowledge between beginning and experienced teachers and demonstrations and modelling by colleagues provides an invaluable source of knowledge about the art of teaching.

Above all, collegial support for beginning teachers should:

- establish strong, positive and professional relationships for sharing knowledge, understandings and skills
- focus on quality teaching, teacher professionalism and ethical practice
- build a foundation for further professional learning by developing capacity to self-evaluate and critically reflect on practice
- link beginning teachers, mentors/coaches, supervisors with networks external to the school, including tertiary institutions and professional associations.