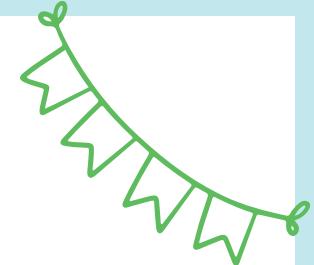


LEADERSHIP IN ACTION – SUPPORTING NEW TEACHERS THROUGH THEIR FIRST TERM

The first term of teaching is one of the most challenging yet formative periods in a teacher's career. New teachers enter the classroom full of passion, but often face steep learning curves, emotional strain and overwhelming demands. During this critical time, effective leadership from principals, departmental heads and experienced colleagues can make all the difference.

Leadership in action means more than just assigning mentors or offering advice. It involves intentional support, consistent presence, and *creating a school culture* where new teachers feel valued, guided and confident enough to grow.



The role of the principal in supporting novice teachers

The school principal plays a central role in the success of novice teachers, especially during their challenging first term. Their leadership sets the tone for a positive and inclusive school culture, where new teachers feel welcomed, valued and supported.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

Creating a supportive environment

Principals establish a school climate that encourages collaboration, openness, and a growth mindset. They promote a culture where asking for help is normal and support is readily available.



Providing clear orientation

They ensure all novice teachers receive a thorough induction that covers school routines, policies, procedures and expectations. This helps reduce anxiety and allows new staff to settle in confidently.

Assigning effective mentors

Principals identify and appoint skilled, experienced teachers who match the novice teacher's subject or phase as mentors. They ensure time is allocated for regular mentorship activities.



Monitoring and support

Principals regularly check in with new teachers – either directly or through line managers – to monitor wellbeing, workload and progress. They are alert to signs of burnout or disengagement and respond proactively.

Encouraging professional growth

They provide opportunities for ongoing development through workshops, classroom observations, peer learning, and reflection. New teachers are encouraged to set professional goals and track their growth.

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Recognition and motivation

Principals play a key role in celebrating small wins and recognising effort, which boosts morale and builds confidence in novice teachers.

Ensuring access to resources

They ensure that novice teachers have access to the teaching materials, planning tools and physical resources they need to succeed in the classroom.



References:

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The role of the departmental head in supporting novice teachers

The departmental head is the **day-to-day leader and subject/phase guide** for novice teachers. Their close working relationship and availability make them essential to helping new teachers settle, grow and succeed during their first term.

Curriculum and planning support

- ▶ Break down the curriculum into manageable units
- ▶ Share plans, templates and assessment tools
- ▶ Ensure alignment with school goals and timelines

Mentoring and coaching

- ▶ Provide subject guidance and emotional support
- ▶ Give feedback from lesson observations
- ▶ Model effective teaching and professionalism

Classroom management guidance

- ▶ Share behaviour management strategies
- ▶ Help establish routines and procedures
- ▶ Support with challenging situations

Monitoring progress and performance

- ▶ Regularly review plans, assessments and marking
- ▶ Help set realistic teaching goals
- ▶ Track progress and provide feedback and praise

Building confidence

- ▶ Encourage trying new ideas and reflection
- ▶ Celebrate small wins and growth
- ▶ Normalise mistakes as part of learning

Resource support

- ▶ Assist with accessing teaching materials and equipment
- ▶ Guide to finding policies, frameworks and examples



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