

Further Reading: What is probation and why is it used?

The probation period of a newly appointed teacher is an opportunity for the school to observe and assess a new teacher's behaviour and performance in the classroom and amongst peers to determine whether they have the required skills and aptitude for the job. It is also an opportunity for the newly appointed teacher to ascertain whether this is a suitable job for them.

A probation period ensures that both the school and new teacher are satisfied they can work together, deliver quality teaching and contribute to a conducive work climate at the school.

Standing in front of a noisy unruly class can be quite a shock for a new teacher. It is important for school leaders and peers support new teachers during their first months in post, including guiding them in how to manage children in the classroom, how to deliver teaching in different subjects effectively with optimal impact on the pupils' learning, and giving moral support.

The school leader has overall responsibility for introducing and supporting a new teacher. Peers, especially senior teachers and experienced subject teachers also have an essential role to play in making new teachers feel comfortable and supported.

To do this, schools should assign a mentor to support and guide new teachers from their first day in the job. In smaller schools this will be the school leader or the deputy. Schools may wish to form teacher groups who meet regularly to discuss their work, experiences and challenges. Such groups can provide a social context for new teachers helping them integrate into the school environment.

Each new teacher undergoes a systematic induction programme to support their entry into the teaching service and the school.

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